G. Rushout
1790

THREE DIALOGUES

ON THE

SACRAMENTS

AND

CLERGYMEN.

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ON THE

AMUSEMENTS

OF

CLERGYMEN.

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CLERGYMEN.

SECOND EDITION.

Renounce the world, the preacher cries.
We do —— a multitude replies.
But one, as innocent regards
A ſnug, and friendly game at cards.
Another can, whate'er you ſay,
Perceive no miſchief in a play.
Some love a concert, or a race,
And others, ſhooting, and the chaſe.
Reviled, yet loved; renounced, yet followed,
Thus, bit by bit, the world is ſwallowed.
Each thinks his neighbour makes too free;
Yet likes a ſlice as well as he.

COWPER.

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ON THE

AMUSEMENTS

OF

CLERGYMEN.

WHEN Dr. Josiah Frampton's library was sold in London (in the year 1729 *or* 1730) *his divinity books were classed in seven lots; one of which was purchased by Dr. Edwards. The catalogue of this lot mentioned a parcel of MSS. Among these the Doctor found one in Dr. Frampton's own hand-writing,* On the Amusements of Clergymen. *But the Doctor being afraid of giving offence by printing it, it lay in his study till his death. It has now, however, fallen into hands, which are less scrupulous; and the following exact copy of it is presented to the Public.*

September 23, 1686.

I ALWAYS thought it one of the moſt fortunate circumſtances of my life (or rather the moſt providential, as I ought to call it) that ſoon after my leaving college, I was led by various, and ſingular accidents, to the curacy of Wroxal in Warwickſhire. Here I met with many civilities from the gentlemen of the country, particularly from Sir Roger Burgoin, who was equally diſtinguiſhed for his piety, and learning. At his houſe I frequently ſaw that truly venerable man, Dr. Edward Stillingfleet, afterwards Biſhop of Worceſter, but at that time Dean of Paul's. He had been early connected with the Burgoin family,

mily, and ever preſerved a great intimacy with them; which he commonly renewed, every year, by a viſit of two or three weeks.

What Dr. Stillingfleet ſaw in me, I know not: but I thought myſelf very unworthy of the civilities he ſhewed me. I was certainly, at that time, a very incorrect young man. I had entered into the miniſtry with little attention to the duties, I had taken on me to diſcharge. I loved ſociety, and was fond of country diverſions: and though I was fond alſo of my book, I would at any time have left it for a day's diverſion with the hounds—a ramble in the woods with

my gun—or a game of cards, and a dance in the evening. Such as I was however Dr. Stillingfleet was particularly obliging to me; and friendly enough to give me a hint, now and then, with regard to my conduct, which, I hope I may with truth ſay, was not loſt upon me.—An opportunity however occurred, which enabled me to receive more than *caſual* advantage from his converſation.

During one of his annual viſits to the Burgoin family, he was ſeized with a violent fit of the gout, to which his latter years were very ſubject. It happened at this critical time, that Sir Roger Burgoin and his lady were called into Worceſterſhire to attend

their

their mother, who lay at the point of death: and as the Dean expreſſed a deſire for my company, in their abſence, I gave him as much of it, as I could; following not more his deſire, than my own inclination. He was at that time engaged in correcting his *Originæ Sacræ* * for a new edition; and had brought down with him ſeveral Latin books to conſult. As I could read that language

* This very learned work was written, when Stillingfleet was under thirty years of age. A ſtory is told, of his having been put to the bluſh by biſhop Sanderſon, his diocefan; who ſeeing a young man at his viſitation, of the name of Stillingfleet, and not knowing his perſon, aſked him, whether he were related to the great Stillingfleet, who wrote the *Originæ Sacræ*?

with accuracy enough, I was of ſome little uſe to him. While I read, he noted with his pen the paſſages he wanted. The intervals were filled with converſation.

We were ſitting together, one day, after dinner; and the Dean laying up his feet on a cuſhion, and being tolerably free from pain, began to rally me a little on my attachment to country diverſions—a ſubject he had often before caſually introduced; and on which he knew I had a weak ſide. I had brought him two young partridges that day for his dinner; and he began by expreſſing his obligations to me for my attention to

him; and then aſked me ſome queſtion, which led me to give him an account of my day's exploits. I did not ſee his drift; and in the ſpirit of a ſportſman, told him, that the late rainy ſeaſon had made game very ſcarce—that the two covies, from which I had ſhot the brace I had brought to him, were the only birds I had ſeen the whole day, though I had been out from five in the morning till eleven at noon; and had walked upwards of fifteen miles.

Well, ſaid the Dean, with an affected gravity of countenance, I only wiſhed to know the extent of my obligation to you; and I find your

philanthropy has done more for me in giving me ſix hours of your time to procure me a delicacy, than I could have done (even were I as able to walk as you are) for any man in Chriſtendom.

From being a little jocular, he became, by degrees, ſerious. I have often thought, ſaid he, Mr. Frampton, (and I know your candor will excuſe me) that the Clergy have rather injured the reſpectability of their characters by mixing too much with the *amuſements* of laymen. They not only get into a trifling way of ſpending their time; but by making themſelves cheap, they diminiſh

miniſh the weight of their inſtructions; and often give a ſort of ſanction by their preſence to gaieties, and impropriеties, which were better checked. It is a common ſpeech in the mouths of licentious people, that they muſt be right, becauſe they have gotten the parſon along with them.—Indeed a clergyman cannot be too cautious with regard to his character. It is a matter of the greateſt delicacy, and eaſily ſullied. If he act contrary to it, he always has a conſciouſneſs about him, which makes him jealous of every eye: and if he become hardened, he is among the moſt contemptible of mankind.—Beſides, *amuſements* in their own nature, have a won-

a wonderful effect on manners. In young minds eſpecially they ſoon form habits: and habits as quickly form characters*. I could point out to you a young clergyman, whom I believe you muſt have ſeen here, as he is unhappily related to this worthy family, who came from the univerſity every thing his friends could wiſh: but unhappily, being placed near ſome of the joyous fraternity of the horn, he became in a little time a mere fox-hunter, and has nothing of the clergyman now about him, but a dark-coloured-coat,

* Habits are ſoon aſſumed; but when we ſtrive
To ſtrip them off, 'tis being flayed alive.
COWPER.

coat, and hardly that.—You will eaſily, however, underſtand, that when I reſtrict the clergyman from joining too freely with the amuſements of the laity, I am equally hurt with every appearance of haughtineſs, and moroſeneſs. If the character of the clergyman is not marked with modeſty, and humility, it is bereft of its moſt diſtinguiſhed graces.

But, ſaid I, Sir, may not example work the other way; and the preſence of a grave clergyman be a check upon licentiouſneſs?

Sometimes, replied the Dean, it may:

may: and when a clergyman mixes in improper company *with this view*, and is conſcious of his own powers of control, he imitates that bright example, which ſorted with *publicans and ſinners*. A very reſpectable clergyman, a friend of mine, having heard that a favourite youth had been decoyed by bad company into a diſreputable houſe, went thither himſelf; and pretending buſineſs with the young man, ſat down on a ſlight invitation, among a ſet of debauchees, truſting his character to its credit. He was a man of ſevere aſpect, ſtrong ſenſe, and ready expreſſion; and therefore well fitted for the office he undertook.

Awhile

Awhile he overawed, by the ſuddenneſs of his appearance, the vice and folly he was mixed with. But well knowing, that in a little time the impreſſion he made, would go off, and he might be liable to affronts, he retired, before the company could rally their impudence; and carried off with him his young friend; who would frequently declare afterwards, that he believed this very circumſtance brought him more to recollection, than any event of his life; and perhaps ſaved him from ruin.—But now, my dear Sir, though I have accommodated your argument with an example, I muſt add, that I think the accommodation gives it little ſupport.

I fear

I fear the *motive exemplified here*, has little weight in the common intercourſe of amuſements between the clergy and laity.

But may not this intercourſe, ſaid I, Sir, though without any *direct view* of leading out of *immediate miſchief*, ſtill have its uſe? Even the preſence of a reſpectable clergyman, I ſhould think, might often be a happy reſtraint.

Why, yes, anſwered the Dean; but then, my good friend, you will conſider, that a *young* clergyman can rarely act this part. Years are neceſſary to give reſpectability to *this mode* of inſtructive

ſtructive intercourſe. Natural talents too, which few people poſſeſs, are neceſſary. A man of moroſe character may perhaps be of ſervice with his pen in his cloſet, or by his diſcourſes in a pulpit; but, however pious, and well-meaning, he will hardly be of much uſe in any of the ſcenes of common life. If again, we avoid moroſeneſs by aſſuming the colour of our company (which muſt, in a degree, always be done, when we wiſh to reform in this way), I fear, inſtead of doing good to others, we ſhall only injure ourſelves.

But it is a difficult matter, ſaid I, Sir, eſpecially for a young man, to

preſerve

preſerve thoſe exact bounds of intercourſe, which his character may require. When he enters firſt into the world, and is taken notice of by thoſe, who are in a ſtation above him, it is hardly poſſible for him to reſiſt the importunities he meets with to enter into various amuſements; to drink his glaſs freely; or make one in parties, which in fact perhaps he may not approve.

No doubt, ſaid the Dean, it may be difficult. But do you believe, that when God placed you in a ſtate of trial, he meant that you ſhould live without difficulties? The whole of life is a conflict: and if we do not

begin

begin early to brace on our moral armour, and accuſtom ourſelves to it, when are we to enter the field? —I ſhould hope it is for want of conſideration, more than any thing elſe, that ſo many young clergymen err in this matter. I could wiſh them to fix in their own minds certain bounds to their amuſements, and remember the poet's caution,

Quos ultra, citraque, nequit conſiſtere rectum.

Aye, Sir, ſaid I, theſe *certi fines*— this narrow path between the *citra*, and the *ultra*, I have often in vain endeavoured to purſue. And if you can give me any inſtruction to guide my footſteps better through the

amuſements of life, than they have hitherto been conducted, I ſhall kindly receive them, and lay them up in a grateful memory.

It is very probable, my dear Sir, replied the Dean, that my rules may be ſtricter, than you would wiſh to comply with. I have thought often on the ſubject lately for the ſake of a young clergyman, in whoſe well-doing I was much intereſted: but I had not all the ſucceſs I hoped for.

I aſſured the Dean, I ſhould endeavour to be a more obſervant diſciple. I did indeed ſpend too much of my time, I feared, in amuſements of va-

rious

rious kinds; but I was hopeful, that my errors proceeded more from inattention (the apology he was pleaſed to furniſh) than from any bad diſpoſition.

The good Dean was pleaſed to ſay, he believed me; and added ſome other friendly expreſſions, which not being to our preſent purpoſe, I omit. He then aſked me, what was my idea of an *amuſement*; or how I ſhould *define* it?

This was a puzzling queſtion to one, who had treſpaſſed ſo much on this head; and who having never thought much on the ſubject, ſeldom

had any end, but barely to pleaſe himſelf. I *could* have given him a definition of *amuſement*; but I was afraid of bringing my own practice too much within its cenſure. To gain therefore a little time for reflection, I aſked, Whether he meant *amuſement in general*, or confined the queſtion to the *amuſements of clergymen?*

Why, truly, ſaid the Dean, the amuſements of all people require regulation enough. But my queſtion, at preſent, relates only to the *amuſements of the clergy*.

I anſwered, that I thought *bodily exerciſe* was one end; and as to the *amuſement*

amuſement of the mind, I thought its only end was to relax, and fit it the better for ſtudy.

Your definition, ſaid the Dean, is ſo far good: but it does not go far enough. It conſiders only the *purpoſe* of amuſement: whereas it ſhould alſo take in the *quality*. You will allow, I ſuppoſe, that the *clerical amuſement* ſhould be ſuited to the *clerical profeſſion?*

I allowed it certainly.

Well, then, ſaid the Dean, we have now, I think, obtained a full definition of *clerical amuſement*. It

ſhould intend the *exerciſe of the body, and the recreation of the mind*; but it ſhould alſo be *ſuited to the genius of the profeſſion.* As the firſt member however of this definition relates to amuſement in general; and applies as well *ad populum*, as *ad clerum*, we will, if you pleaſe, paſs it over at preſent. If we can eſtabliſh the ſecond part, I hope there will be no great danger of miſtaking the firſt. I ſhall only therefore endeavour to ſhew you, that all *clerical amuſements* ſhould be ſuited to the *clerical profeſſion.*—Now, in order to throw the beſt light on this ſubject, I ſhould wiſh to conſider amuſements under the three heads of *riotous and*

cruel

cruel—of *trifling and ſeducing*—and laſtly, of *innocent and inſtructive*: for I think it very poſſible, that an amuſement may be characterized with both theſe latter epithets, though either may be ſufficient. Are theſe heads, added he, comprehenſive enough to include all kinds of amuſement? Or do you recollect any other?

I thought them ſufficiently comprehenſive.

Well, then, ſaid the Dean, we will begin with ſuch amuſements as are *riotous*, and *cruel*: and among theſe I ſhould be inclined to aſſign the firſt rank to *hunting*. It is an unfeeling

exerciſe, derived from our ſavage anceſtors, who hunted at firſt for *food*, and conſigned the barbarous practice to their poſterity for *paſtime*. Its giving birth to foreſt laws, and game laws--its injuring corn-lands, and deſtroying fences—its ſetting ſquires, and their tenants; gentlemen, and their neighbours, at variance—its conſuming the forage of a country in breeding deſtructive, or uſeleſs animals in the room of ſuch as are really uſeful—the riotous uproar of the chaſe, ſo oppoſite to the mild ſerenity, which ſhould characterize the clergyman—and the noiſy, intemperate evening, to which it often leads; add ſuch an accumulation of

miſchief

miſchief to hunting, that I ſhould be ſorry any clergyman ſhould give his countenance to it.—To this we may add the cruelty exerciſed both on the animals, that purſue, and the animals, that are purſued—the horſe puſhed to the laſt extremity—the hound trained to the chaſe with ſavage barbarity *—and the wretched fugitive agonizing in the extremity of diſtreſs.

But there is ſtill a greater miſchief, which often attends theſe riotous amuſements. When the ſquire hunts with his neighbours, he introduces no more

* ——————————At his foot
The ſpaniel dying for ſome venial fault,
Under diſſection of the knotted ſcourge.
COWPER.

more corruption into the pariſh than he found. But I have ſometimes known *annual hunts* eſtabliſhed in ſporting countries, which draw together hundreds of profligate people from different parts, who call themſelves *gentlemen*, but are really *peſts* of the neighbourhood, to which they reſort; introducing new vices into the villages, and every kind of debauchery. Their ſervants, who are commonly of the ſame ſtamp, ſpread the corruption among the peaſants, and ſervant-girls, which their maſters ſpread among the farmer's ſons, and daughters.—The clergyman, who mixes in ſuch ſcenes, is far out of

ſight

ſight of the bare decency of his profeſſion.

But pray, Sir, ſaid I, may not ſome little plea be offered in favour of hunting? Is it not a manly exerciſe? Does it not furniſh our tables with food; and rid the country of noxious animals?

I beſeech you, replied the Dean, do not call in argument to defend a paſtime, which has no alliance with reaſon. Call it a wild paſſion—a brutal propenſity—or any thing that indicates its nature. But to give it any connection with reaſon, is making a union between black and white.—

white.—But it is *manly* forſooth to hunt. *Manlineſs*, I ſhould ſuppoſe, implies ſome mode of action, that *becomes a man*. Hunting might formerly, for aught I know, have been a manly exerciſe, when the country was overrun with boars, and wolves, and it was a *public ſervice* to extirpate them. But to honour with the name of *manlineſs*, the cruel practice of purſuing timid animals to put them to death merely for *amuſement*, is, in my opinion, perverting the meaning of words. There are many ways ſurely of uſing manly exerciſe, at leaſt as healthful—and far more innocent, and leſs expenſive, and dangerous, than galloping over hedges,

gates,

gates, and ditches. If the *manlineſs* of the action lie in the riſk you run of breaking your neck, for *no end*, it would ſtill be greater manlineſs to jump down a precipice.—The fox-hunter, I doubt not, would ridicule the man, who runs about with a hand-net, hunting a butterfly: but I proteſt, I ſee not for what reaſon. The exerciſe of the butterfly-hunter is as good; and the pleaſure of the chaſe is, to him at leaſt, equal.—But you alledge, that hunting ſupplies the table with food. I dare ſay, Sir Roger's game-keeper will tell you, he could ſupply it better in twenty other ways. I have certainly no objection to take the lives of animals

animals for food; and grant, that if they were ſuffered to multiply, they would become noxious. What I mean is, that I cannot allow turning the *deſtruction* of them into an *amuſement*—and leaſt of all into a *clerical amuſement*.—I knew a gentleman, who took great delight in knocking down an ox; which he performed with much dexterity: and it was his common *amuſement* to go among the butchers on a ſlaughtering-day, and give two or three of them a ſhilling a-piece, to let him be their ſubſtitute in that operation. You call ſuch a man a brute: and he ſurely was one. But you would find it difficult to ſhew, that the circumſtance of

riding

riding on a horſe, and bawling after a pack of dogs, makes the amuſement leſs brutal.

Surely, ſaid I, Sir, there is a difference between the pleaſure of a purſuit; and a pleaſure, which conſiſts merely in the act of inflicting death?

Why, yes, anſwered the Dean, there is a difference; but I know not, on which ſide of it the advantage lies. If hunting be a more *genteel* ſpecies of butchery, it is certainly a more *cruel* one. The ox receives its death by an inſtant ſtroke; whereas the hare is firſt thrown into convulſions of terror, for four or five hours toge-

ther; and then ſeized, in the midſt of its agony, and torn piece-meal by a pack of ravenous blood-hounds*.—As to your laſt argument, that hunting rids the country of noxious animals, I apprehend you are miſtaken in the fact. I rather think it tends to repleniſh the country with them. As one

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* ——— Deteſted ſport,
That owes its pleaſure to another's pain!
That feeds upon the ſobs, and dying ſhrieks
Of harmleſs nature!———

COWPER.

The ſavage ſoul of game is up at once:
The pack full opening, various: the ſhrill horn
Reſounding from the hills: the neighing ſteed,
Wild for the chace; and the loud hunter's ſhout;
O'er a weak, harmleſs, flying creature, all
Mixed in mad tumult, and diſcordant joy.

THOMPSON.

one inſtance at leaſt I can teſtify, that I offended a whole club of ſporting neighbours, in a manner that was hardly ever to be gotten over, by giving a man half-a-crown for killing a fox, which had thinned my poultry-yard. And I dare ſay, there is not a hunting ſquire in the country, who would not, at any time, ſuffer a dozen of his tenant's lambs to be worried, to ſave half the number of foxes' cubs. Nay, I have often known covers of conſiderable extent, left purpoſely in fields, or perhaps planted, merely to decoy foxes into a neighbourhood by providing a proper ſhelter for them.—But you have provoked me to ſay all this, by aiming to eſtabliſh an alliance be-

tween hunting and rationality. I intended not to diſturb the ſquire either in his riotous day, or his roaring night. I conſider *his* malady, as a ſurgeon does a mortification, which has ſeized the vitals—beyond all hope of recovery*. What I mean, is only to admoniſh the clergyman not to follow his example.

It is but juſt however to ſay, that examples to warn him might alſo be found in our own profeſſion. I remember a clergyman in a neighbourhood, where I once lived, who had two

* For tho' the fox he follows, may be tamed,
The man fox-follower never is reclaimed.
COWPER.

two benefices; but he ſpent little time at either of them, becauſe neither happened to be in a ſporting country. The hunting-ſeaſon he always ſpent near a ſquire in the pariſh next to mine, whoſe diſciplined pack was famous. With this gentleman, and his hounds, he lived on terms of the greateſt intimacy. Indeed both the ſquire and his dogs looked up to him, as their ableſt leader. Though he was a miſerable preacher, he was uncommonly muſical in the field; and could cheer, and animate his ſonorous friends with an eloquence beyond the huntſman himſelf, whoſe aſſociate he always was, and whoſe place, on any emergency, he could amply ſupply. He was

much readier at finding a hare, than a text of Scripture; and though he was ſcarce acquainted with the face of one of his pariſhioners, he knew exactly the character of every hound in the ſquire's pack; and could run over their names with much greater readineſs, than thoſe of the twelve apoſtles*. He had at length the misfortune to break his neck at the end of a fox chaſe; but not till he had firſt broken

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* Oh laugh, or mourn with me, the rueful jeſt,
A caſſock'd huntſman!——
He takes the field, the maſter of the pack,
Cries, Well done, Saint—and claps him on the back.
Is this the path of ſanctity? Is this
To ſtand a way-mark in the road to bliſs?
COWPER.

broken the heart of a very amiable woman, who had unhappily connected herſelf with him.

Such a clergyman, ſaid I, is hardly to be paralleled in a century. But in an inferior degree, I fear, there are many of our brethren, who allow themſelves great indulgence. I remember a hunting-clergyman, who received a very proper rebuke from one of his brethren; and which I have reaſon to believe was of ſervice to him, as long as he lived. He had been lamenting his unfortunate lot, in being ſtationed in a country where there was no hunting. The other looking him full in the face, ſaid, with

great gravity of countenance, and in a deliberate tone of voice; "At the great day of accounts, the queſtion will not be, *where* have you lived; but *how* have you lived?"—All this however is carrying amuſement to exceſs. But ſuppoſe, Sir, when you are riding out, you happen to hear the hounds, is there any harm merely in taking a little exerciſe with them, if you do not join in the riot of the chaſe?

I hate, ſaid the Dean, to ſee a man do any thing by halves. Is it right, or is it wrong? If it be right, do it boldly. If it be wrong, turn your horſe another way, and take your exerciſe

erciſe in a contrary direction. Never go to the edge of a precipice. You can hardly help going a little farther than you intended. I remember a clergyman, who was not remarkable for neglecting, at leaſt the outward part of his duty; but once unhappily forgot it through his love for hunting. He was eagerly engaged in a fox-chaſe, when the fox *took to earth*, as they call it: on which he cried out, "Gentlemen, I "muſt leave you: This puts me in "mind, that I have a corpſe to bury "at four o'clock this evening; and I "fear I ſhall be an hour too late."— Beſides, continued the Dean, you cannot well avoid, in this field of riot,

at leaſt if you are often ſeen in it, making an acquaintance with ſeveral, to whom, for your character's ſake, you would not wiſh to be known.—But indeed, as I obſerved, to mix, in any degree, in theſe ſcenes of cruelty, and riotous exultation, is unbecoming the clerical profeſſion.—And (to cloſe my argument with ſcripture) I ſhould wiſh you to conſider, that as many good people, as well as I, diſapprove a clergyman's mixing in theſe riotous amuſements, ſo of courſe it will give offence to all theſe good people. No man therefore, who has the honour of his profeſſion at heart, would give offence, where the matter in queſtion is of ſo

little

little conſequence as a mere amuſement. Let him conſider how ſtrict St. Paul was in matters of this kind. St. Paul's example is certainly not very faſhionable; but with a clergyman, I ſhould hope it might have ſome weight. He gives us many hints, which come home to the point we are now diſcuſſing. Hunting was out of the queſtion. He would not certainly have permitted Timothy or Titus to hunt, if they had been ſo diſpoſed. But he forbids us to give offence in matters, that are of much more concern than mere amuſement. *If meat*, ſays he, *make my brother to offend, I will eat no fleſh while the*

world ſtandeth, leſt I make my brother to offend.

If you will give me leave, ſaid I, Sir, I will juſt mention one argument more. As the hound is endowed with the ſagacity of following its game, it ſeems as if Providence had intended it for hunting.

Aye, ſaid the Dean, that is true: and in the ſame way Providence encourages horſe-racing, by making horſes ſwift; and cock-fighting, by making cocks courageous.—My dear Mr. Frampton, I hope you are a better naturaliſt, than to pay any attention to theſe flimſy apologies.

God

God Almighty has given various inſtincts to his creatures—all of them for wiſe purpoſes, though ſome of them are beyond our comprehenſion. That thirſt of blood in the rapacious kind ſeems intended to preſerve an equilibrium among animals: and as they all owe a death to nature, it is of little conſequence whether the defenceleſs tribe die in a natural way, or by the jaws of a tiger.—Among the ſavage kind is the dog. We reclaim him from the foreſt, and a uſeful ſervant he is. He guards our houſes—he protects our cattle—he aſſiſts us in deſtroying noxious animals. He was formerly of great uſe in procuring food for our anceſ-

tors;

tors; and I know no objection to his ſtill taking wild animals for our food, if they can be taken in no eaſier way. But if we make his tractable diſpoſition an excuſe for our own cruelty, and ſanguinary amuſements, we ſurely uſe him in a way which God Almighty never intended.

I told the good Dean, he had ſilenced me. I was afraid my partiality for the diverſion, had been founded rather on inclination than argument. But nobody again, I hoped, ſhould ever *take offence* at my following a pack of hounds.—But pray, ſaid I, Sir, do you allow ſhooting?

ing? It is a much leſs riotous amuſement; nay, it may even be a ſolitary one.

To ſpeak plainly, replied the Dean, I cordially allow no *amuſement* to a clergyman that has any thing to do with *ſhedding blood.*—Beſides, I think a peculiar cruelty attends this diverſion. You may wound, and maim, as well as kill. My *heart*, I am ſure, would be ſtrongly affected—indeed, even my *conſcience*—if I ſhould make a poor animal miſerable all the days of its life, for the ſake of giving myſelf a momentary amuſement.—It was but the laſt autumn, when riding down a lane, I ſaw two poor miſerable

partridges

partridges—both bleeding, and one trailing a ſhattered leg after it—fluttering, and running before me. Poor wretches, ſaid I, I wiſh the perſon, who put you into this miſerable ſituation, may never feel the diſtreſs he has occaſioned! I then ordered my ſervant to diſmount, and run after them. The lame one he caught; the other crawled into a hedge, where it probably lingered out its miſerable life a few days longer.

But the expert markſman, I told the Dean, never ſhoots among a covey, but takes his aim at a ſingle bird.

And

And are all ſhooters, ſaid he, *expert markſmen?* And does the expert markſman himſelf never maim the bird he aims at, or the bird that is near it? Often, no doubt, he maims both.—To repel the attack of a bird, or beaſt of prey, I have certainly no objection; nor to take the life of an animal for food: though I ſhould not wiſh to make a clergyman the butcher, whether an ox or a partridge is to be ſlaughtered. But to take the life of an animal, except in one or the other of theſe caſes, I hold to be abſolutely immoral. And I think equally ſo to run the riſk of maiming it, and making it miſerable for life. The moſt humane way

therefore of taking birds is with a net, which allows you to diſcharge ſuch as you wiſh, and put to a ſpeedy death thoſe you take for food.

But to take birds in a net, ſaid I, Sir, is not at all in the ſpirit of ſportſmen.—Beſides, there are ſome ſpecies of game, as pheaſants particularly, which cannot be taken in nets.

Do not tell me, replied the Dean, of the *ſpirit of ſportſmen*. Though the ties of humanity, no doubt, equally bind them; yet to ſuch hopeleſs hearers I ſhould no more attempt to

preach,

preach, than I ſhould to their ſpaniels.—Nor do I pretend to know, what kind of game may be taken in one way, and what in another: though, I have no doubt, my friend Robert * could inform me, how pheaſants might be taken without ſhooting them. But what I labour at chiefly is to convince ſuch ſober-minded clergymen, as I conceive you to be, that every ſpecies of bloody, and cruel amuſement is unſuitable to the genius, and temper of a Chriſtian divine; and enters more by habit into a character, than is commonly ſuppoſed. It is under the idea of tainting

* Sir Roger's game-keeper.

tainting a character with profeſſional habits, that the butcher is prohibited from ſerving on a jury.

For myſelf, Sir, I replied, I am only aſhamed, that from the dictates of my own reaſon I have not ſooner acknowledged the truths you ſet before me. I always had my doubts: but not ſuppoſing amuſements of this kind to be *ſinful*, and not conceiving them to be *improper*, from the eagerneſs, with which numbers of my elder brethren purſue them, I ſtifled my own ſuggeſtions. But in my preſent ſentiments I believe I ſhall never fire a gun again for my diverſion, at any kind of game.

To aſſiſt your good reſolutions, ſaid the Dean, I can ſuggeſt two, or three other conſiderations, which are worth the attention of a clergyman. He can ſcarce be ſettled in any place, in which he will not find the ſquire of his pariſh attached violently to his game; and jealous of every man, who interferes with him in this great point. He is eſpecially jealous of the clergyman, whom he conſiders as an interloper. I have known many clergymen get into ſilly ſquabbles on this ſcore; and by making themſelves obnoxious to the ſquire, render themſelves much leſs able to be of ſervice in

their pariſhes. On many occaſions the ſquire's countenance may be of great uſe to the clergyman in managing his parochial affairs: and it is highly imprudent to loſe his aſſiſtance for a trifle.

I once, ſaid I, experienced this inconvenience myſelf. But I had the diſcretion, when I found I had raiſed a jealouſy, immediately to deſiſt. At preſent, I have free permiſſion from Sir Roger, and two or three other gentlemen of the country, to range their domains, when I pleaſe: So that I lay down my arms in the plenitude of my power.

I ſhould

I ſhould wiſh ſtill farther to ſuggeſt to you, continued the Dean, that if any miſchance, in theſe violent exerciſes, ſhould happen to a clergyman, it tells much worſe, than when it happens to another perſon. How oddly would it ſound, if the pariſh were told, on a Sunday, there could be no ſervice, becauſe the parſon had put out his ſhoulder, the day before, at a fox-chaſe? If a clergyman loſe a hand, or an eye in ſhooting, as is ſometimes the caſe, I have generally found the commiſeration of people, mixed with a certain degree of contempt. If he had been about his buſineſs, they would ſay, it would not have happened.—The commiſ-

ſion alſo of an accidental miſchief, in theſe unclerical amuſements, will always be more diſtreſſing, at leaſt it ought, to a clergyman, than to a layman.—Poor Archbiſhop Abbot was a melancholy inſtance. He was exemplary in many points, but unhappily indulged himſelf in the amuſement of ſhooting; and as he was taking this exerciſe in a park belonging to Lord Zouch in Hampſhire, he had the misfortune to ſhoot one of the keepers. After this event, he never recovered his cheerfulneſs; and party running high, it gave his enemies a great handle againſt him. It was brought as a queſtion, whether he could ever again officiate as an

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archbiſhop. After a long inquiry, it was determined, that he muſt be degraded, but that the king might again reſtore him; which was accordingly done.—I could point out a prelate of theſe days *, who, though otherwiſe a very reſpectable man, does his character no ſervice by being a ſportſman. Formerly he kept a pack of hounds; but has had the decency, ſince he obtained a mitre, to diſmiſs them. He is ſtill however his own game-keeper; and is ſo expert, that he wants no aſſiſtance in furniſhing his table with every article of game. Archbiſhop Abbot's misfortune reminds

* About the beginning of James II.

minds me of a ſimilar accident, of which this prelate had nearly been the occaſion. A young lady, who lived near him, was riding quietly along a cloſe lane, when a gun went off, on the other ſide of the hedge, cloſe to her horſe's ear. The beaſt took fright—ſtarted violently aſide—and threw her; though providentially ſhe was not hurt. While her ſervant was following her horſe, ſhe walked gently up the lane; and coming to an opening in the hedge, the biſhop, in all his ſhooting accoutrements, preſented himſelf. He made his apology, and hoped ſhe was not hurt. She thanked him for his kind enquiry: but ſaid, ſhe ſhould

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have been better pleaſed, if it had been needleſs.

I told the Dean, I remembered ſomething of the ſtory, about two years ago, in the public prints.

Yes, ſaid the Dean, ſhe was an arch girl, and inſerted it in a very ludicrous manner; making a laughable contraſt between the biſhop's ſporting attire, and his lawn ſleeves, and other epiſcopal habiliments *.

Well,

* Dr. Johnſon's profound reverence for the hierarchy made him expect from biſhops the higheſt degree of decorum. There are gradations, he ſaid, in conduct: there is morality—decency—propriety. None of theſe ſhould

Well, Sir, ſaid I, I hope theſe examples will prove ſufficient cautions to

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ſhould be violated by a biſhop. When a biſhop places himſelf in a ſituation, where he has no diſtinct character, and is of no conſequence, he degrades the dignity of his order. Nor was it only in the dignitaries of the church that Dr. Johnſon required a particular decorum, and delicacy of behaviour; he juſtly conſidered, that the clergy, as perſons ſet apart for the ſacred office of ſerving at the altar, and impreſſing the minds of men with the aweful concerns of a future ſtate, ſhould be ſomewhat more ſerious than the generality of mankind; and have a ſuitable compoſure of manners. A due ſenſe of the dignity of their profeſſion, independent of higher motives, will ever prevent them from loſing their diſtinction in an indiſcriminate ſociality: and did ſuch as affect this, know how much it leſſens them in the eyes of thoſe, who they think to pleaſe by it, they would feel themſelves much mortified.

Boſwell's Life of Johnſon, vol. iii. p. 32.

to me, though I am ſorry to receive them from ſuch exalted characters.—I ſhould wiſh you however to believe, that I am an enemy to eruelty in all ſhapes; and do not remember, that I ever wantonly took the life of the meaneſt reptile.

We certainly, ſaid the Dean, have no right. When a ſpider takes poſſeſſion of my houſe, or a ſnail of my garden, I make no ſcruple to deſtroy them. They are invaders. But if I meet with either of them in the fields, I ſhould think myſelf the invader, if I diſturbed them. If a wolf attempt to ſeize a lamb, which is my property, and under my protection,

tection, I think his life ſhould pay the forfeit. But if he can ſeize an antelope, or any other wild animal, with which I have no concern, I have no authority to interfere. He has the ſame deed of gift to alledge for ſeizing the antelope, which I have for the beef or mutton I buy in the market. And yet I know not, whether I ſhould not put him to death, wherever I found him, as a proſcribed villain; as always acting under at leaſt a tacit declaration of war againſt me. If I were not well aſſured, he would attack me, or mine, whenever he could, I am perſuaded, I ſhould never moleſt him.—Man regulates his actions towards his *fel-*

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low-men, by *laws and cuſtoms*. But certainly there are laws alſo to be obſerved between man and beaſt, which are equally coercive, though the injured party has no power of appeal.

I fully accede, ſaid I, Sir, to your code of criminal law between man, and beaſt. It is certainly power, not right, that we appeal to, in wantonly diſpoſing of the lives of animals. And what ſurpriſes me the more, is, we often ſee this wanton breach of natural law in men of humanity. An acquaintance of mine, who is as ready as any man to do a good-natured action, will ſtand whole mornings by the

the ſide of a bridge, ſhooting ſwallows, as they thread the arch, and flit paſt him. He is however no clergyman.

Let him be what he will, ſaid the Dean, his profeſſion has been miſtaken, and he ought to have been bred a butcher. I can have no conception of the humanity of a man, who can find his amuſement in deſtroying the happineſs of a number of little innocent creatures, ſporting themſelves, during their ſhort ſummer, in ſkimming about the air; and without doing injury of any kind, purſuing only their own little happy excurſions, and catching the food,

which Providence has allotted them. But I have ſeen inſtances enough of this kind of cruelty to remove all ſurpriſe. More offence from ſuch deſpotiſm I never remember to have taken, than, about five or ſix years ago, in a little voyage I made into the Iriſh ſea. A nephew of mine, the captain of a cruizer, whom you may remember to have ſeen here laſt ſummer, was then lying at Milford-haven; and, being about to take the voyage I have mentioned, was deſirous to carry me with him, as I had expreſſed an inclination to ſee the wonderful rocky barrier, which nature had formed againſt the ocean, along many of the coaſts of Wales.

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As we drew near a promontory, where the rocks were lofty, we found them inhabited by thouſands of ſea-fowl of different kinds, which at that ſeaſon frequent them. I was greatly amuſed with ſeeing the variety of their buſy actions, and different modes of flight; and with hearing the harſh notes of each, when ſingle; and their varied tones, changed into a ſort of wild harmony, by the clangor of all together. One ſhould have thought a colony, like this, might have been ſafe from all annoy. They are uſeleſs when dead—and harmleſs when alive—We ſaw however, as we proceeded, two or three boats anchoring

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at different diſtances, in which were certain *ſavages*—I can call them by no other name—diverting themſelves with ſhooting at theſe poor birds, as they flew from their neſts, or returned to them with food from the ſea; deſtroying not only the parent-birds, but leaving the helpleſs progeny to clamour in vain for food, and die of hunger. This mode of taking life for no end, is a ſpecies of cruelty, which I ſhould wiſh to brand with the ſevereſt name; and ſhould almoſt deteſt a clergyman, who ſhould find his *amuſement* in it.

I muſt allow, ſaid I, Sir, that what you have ſaid againſt hunting, and

ſhooting, hath entirely convinced me of the impropriety of both, as clerical amuſements.—You have ſaid nothing however againſt fiſhing. Do you allow me to ſuppoſe, this amuſement to be a clerical one? It is ſilent, quiet, and may be contemplative.

I am afraid, replied the Dean, I ſhall be thought too rigid if I abridge a clergyman of this amuſement: and yet I cannot bring myſelf to allow him any *amuſement*, which ariſes from *deſtroying life*. To fiſhing is annexed a peculiar cruelty. An impaled worm writhing upon a hook; or the convulſions of a fiſh under the operation of having a

barbed hook extracted from its bowels; are ideas which greatly hurt my feelings. Catch your fish with a net, and you have my free leave.

But, said I, Sir, the trout, and I believe other fish, inhabit such little rapid rivulets, as are accessible only to a fly. Nets are accommodated chiefly to large rivers; and they require a boat, and other apparatus, which a clergyman cannot always command. Besides, the use of nets is commonly forbidden as too destructive. But the angling rod is generally allowed, and easily procured: and many a clergyman, who lives near a trout-stream, may find it con-

venient to bring a diſh of fiſh, which coſts him nothing, now and then, to his family.

There is ſome force, no doubt, anſwered the Dean, in what you ſay: and if the fiſh can be caught in no other manner, I know not how to object. Only ſtill, if I were the clergyman, I ſhould leave other people to catch them.

But, ſaid I, Sir, many of our great churchmen have indulged themſelves in this amuſement. That ſkilful caſuiſt, and able divine, Dr. Donne, I have heard, was once an able angler; your worthy predeceſſor, Dr.

Nowel, was likewiſe a great proficient in angling. Our preſent worthy primate * alſo I have been told, was inferior to neither of them in his love for angling. And good Mr. Walton †, whoſe lives I have heard you ſpeak of as models of eaſy writing and good ſenſe, wrote a book (though it never perhaps caught your attention) intitled, *The Compleat Angler; or, The Contemplative Man's Recreation.*

Indeed,

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* Archbiſhop Sheldon.

† Iſaac Walton, a Hamburgh-merchant, who retired from buſineſs in the latter part of his life; and was much eſteemed by all the ſcholars of his time. At this period, he had written ſeveral lives; to which he afterwards added the life of Biſhop Sanderſon.

Indeed, ſaid the Dean, you have drawn up againſt me a very formidable body of evidence: but will you give me leave to challenge them? Donne, you know, was eſteemed in the early part of his life, an *incorrect man:* and I ſuppoſe you are not much acquainted with his opinion on this ſubject, after he became *a pious divine.* For my predeceſſor, Dean Nowel, I have a high reverence; and I have heard, as you have, that he was an able angler. But I have heard alſo, that he made it a rule to give all his fiſh to the poor; which looks as if the good man was not quite eaſy in his buſineſs; but thought ſome kind of expiation

piation neceſſary. As to our worthy primate, I have eaten fiſh with him many times at his own table, and the tables of our common friends; and I never heard a ſyllable ſaid, either by himſelf, or others, alluding to his ſkill in angling; ſo that I ſuppoſe that ſkill, whatever it was, has been long ago forgotten among the inaccuracies of his youth. After all, however, I cannot allow the example of any man living to be a teſt of right and wrong. It is not the example which makes the action good; but the goodneſs of the action which gives force to the example. If you could aſſure me, that Dean Nowel, or Dr. Donne (who was ſtill

an acuter man) had ever conſidered the art of angling with any attention in a moral light, their *opinions* at leaſt might have had ſome weight; but when we conſider them as addicted only to a favourite amuſement (and we all know the force of prejudice in ſuch caſes) their *example* appears to me of little value.—As to my friend Walton (whom I much eſteem) though I allow him to be a pleaſing writer, I doubt whether he is a deep reaſoner. How angling can be called the *contemplative Man's Recreation*, I cannot ſee. That the contemplative man may lay his angling rod on the bank, and take out his book, or meditate on a ſubject, I

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can eaſily conceive. But what has that to do with angling? While he is following his profeſſion, and attending to the friſking of his fly, I ſhould not give much for the produce of his contemplation.

Well, Sir, ſaid I, if human examples have no weight with you, let me urge you with ſcriptural authority. Many of the apoſtles were fiſhermen; and our Saviour himſelf bids Peter *caſt his hook into the ſea.*

Why yes, anſwered the Dean; but I doubt whether you will get more from theſe authorities, than from the

the other. Fiſhing, you know, was the occupation of ſeveral of the apoſtles: they fiſhed with nets for a livelihood: and St. Peter, you will remember, did not *caſt his hook into the ſea* for his *amuſement*. However, you find I am not very rigid on this head.—To be ingenuous with you, I am withheld from ſaying all I could wiſh to ſay on this ſubject, by a ſort of pious prejudice. My father was one of the moſt benevolent of men; and one of the moſt ſkilful of anglers. Nobody dreſſed a fly more naturally. Many a time, when I was a boy, have I been delighted with looking into his fiſhing apparatus; and ſeeing his different flies--ſome plain, and

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grey-coated — ſome ſhining with gloſſy green—and others brilliant with ſpots of burniſhed gold—yet all ſo natural, that I think they might have impoſed on the moſt experienced fiſh. Each of theſe he uſed in its proper ſeaſon; and could make it friſk on the ſurface of the water, with the very action of life. All the rivers of the country, and their characters, he well knew; and would ſometimes ride a dozen miles for a good day's fiſhing.—In reſpect to the memory of this excellent perſon (who was as good a man as any you have mentioned, and felt for every creature alive except a fiſh) I would not be too harſh in my cenſure of this

this amuſement. I cannot however, all prejudice apart, forbear ſaying, that, in general, we have no right to take the lives of animals except for food, or to get rid of a nuiſance—and that when we are obliged to take life, we ſhould always take it in the eaſieſt manner, and never as an *amuſement*. All this appears to me ſo much the dictate of nature, and truth, that no man can controvert it *in reaſon*, whatever he may do *in practice*. But the clergyman is under the ſtill ſtricter ties of decency, and reſpect to his character.

But have not you, ſaid I, Sir, confined within too ſtrict a limit the power

power of man over the lives of animals? Are there not other reaſons, beſides obtaining food, and the removal of a nuiſance, which may make the exerciſe of that power lawful? May we not take the whale for his oil, and the beaver for his fur?

I allow it; ſaid the Dean. Where the uſes of man preponderate, his right over the animal ſeems juſt. But perhaps greater liberty may be commonly taken in this matter, than my code will allow. If the uſe be trivial, the claim is imperfect. Though I ſhould permit you to take the whale for his oil; I ſhould not readily grant you

you leave to deſtroy the elephant for his tooth.

I told the Dean, I ſaw the difference very plainly. But, ſaid I, Sir, do you allow the philoſopher to take life in making his reſearches into nature? In examining the wonders of the microſcope; in tracing the circulation of the blood; in diſcovering the properties of air; and in other things, which tend to advance human knowledge, and often ſerve ſome great end of utility?

This queſtion, ſaid the Dean, is rather more difficult. What promotes human knowledge, or ſerves

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any eſſential purpoſe of utility, is certainly of more conſequence, than the life of an animal: and I give you liberty to take it, when you are ſure you are on good ground. But I ſhould interdict this privilege to mere *curioſity*. We may believe, on the credit of others, that the blood circulates; or that an animal will die in an exhauſted receiver.

I then aſked the Dean, if he did not think, on the other hand, that we might carry our tenderneſs in taking life too far? I have frequently, ſaid I, deſerted a path I wiſhed to walk in, becauſe I have found it pre-occupied by a train of ants, which it hurt

hurt me to cruſh. And yet I have ſometimes thought my caution unneceſſary.

No doubt, replied the Dean, every virtue has its extremes—its *ultra* (as we juſt obſerved) as well as its *citra*. I have often ſeen this tenderneſs in taking life carried to a ridiculous length, if we can call any thing ridiculous, that is founded on an amiable principle. I knew a humane man, who would not ſuffer a mouſe to be taken in a ſnap-trap. He allowed it to be taken alive; but he took care to have it carried to a diſtance into the fields, and there ſet at liberty. He would not deſtroy a ſpider, though he

he made no ſcruple to ſweep away its web. My dear Sir, I once ſaid to him, *your tender mercies are cruel.* It would certainly be more merciful to diſpatch theſe poor animals at once, than to make them miſerable by turning them adrift, or leaving them to a languiſhing death, by taking from them their means of ſubſiſtence. All this therefore ſeems to me abſurd. It is making the lives of animals of more conſequence than they ſhould be. It is making a man miſerable for the ſake of a mite. For if we carry this tenderneſs as far as it will fairly go, we ought neither to eat a plum, nor taſte a drop of vinegar. It is not ſize,

which gives value to life. The inſect, that forms the blue of a plum, or that friſks in a drop of vinegar, has certainly the ſame claim to exiſt, as a ſpider, or a mouſe. And how far life extends, we know not; ſo that our tenderneſs in this reſpect, if indulged to exceſs, might be endleſs. Like Indian Bramins, we ſhould not dare to lie down, or ſet a foot to the ground, without examining every footſtep with microſcopical exactneſs. But as theſe little ſwarms of nature interfere thus with all the concerns of men, it is plain that Providence does not lay much ſtreſs on their lives. All therefore that ſeems required, in theſe caſes, is to abſtain

from

from *wanton injury*.—I would not however have you always take the meaſure of a man's virtue by the extraordinary tenderneſs of his feelings. I knew a gentleman, ſo extremely tender towards the lives of animals, that when an earwig crept out of a log of wood, which had been laid on his fire, he forbade any more logs to be taken from that pile, and left it to rot. Yet this very man, with all theſe nice feelings about him, lived avowedly in a ſtate of adultery. Such tenderneſs therefore may, or may not, be allied to virtue—certainly not neceſſarily ſo allied. It is founded merely in nature. But when *any one* affection of the mind is re-

gulated by a *religious principle*, there is in that mind a *controlling power*, which regulates *other* affections. Thus if we abſtain from cruelty on a *religious principle*, we may depend on that *principle* on other occaſions. As to theſe *delicate feelings*, they ſeldom reach beyond their *immediate object*.——Here the Dean made a pauſe, and after a little recollection, ſaid, he thought they had now run over all the *riotous*, and *cruel* amuſements, which he could recollect. As for *cock-fighting*, and *horſe-racing*, he ſaid, they are ſuch gambling diverſions, that I conceive no clergyman would even be preſent at the former; or enter into the ſpirit of

 the

the latter. The race-ground is a wide field, and if he ever enter it for curioſity, he will not only avoid the deep concerns, and commerce of the place, if I may ſo phraſe it; but will alſo keep entirely aloof from the noiſe, and buſtle, and clamour of the ſcene. A friend of mine lived on the confines of a celebrated race-ground. He was fond of horſes, merely as beautiful objects; and liked to ſee their various motions. And as people are generally well mounted at a race, and much agitated, he uſed to gratify his curioſity by walking out in an evening, about the time the race was over; and would get behind ſome hedge, where unſeen

he had a good view of the company returning from their ſport over a fair plain. This was to him the only amuſement of a race; and he would ſay, he believed he had more pleaſure from the ſober enjoyment of this moving picture, than any one could feel, who entered into the wild joy, and jollity of the ſcene.

This put me in mind of a ſtory, which I could not help telling the Dean, of a clergyman in a neighbourhood where I once lived. He had prayers in his church every Wedneſday and Friday. But one Sunday, as he was putting on his ſurplice in the veſtry, Matthew, ſaid he to his clerk, I ſhall be at the races on Wedneſday, ſo you muſt give notice,

tice, there will be no prayers. Poor Matthew, who had not been fully inſtructed, and did not himſelf enter into the decorum of things, made all the congregation ſtare, by giving notice in a very audible voice, *that there would be no prayers on Wedneſday, becauſe the parſon was going to the races.*

The good Dean received my ſtory with a forced laugh; for I perceived his feet grew rather painful to him. He rang ſoon after for his ſervant to change his poſture; and I thinking myſelf in the way, wiſhed him a good night.

END OF THE FIRST DIALOGUE.

SECOND DIALOGUE.

IT was two days before I had an opportunity of renewing my converſation with the good Dean; which I was not ſorry for, as it gave me time to put on paper what had already paſſed. He had divided amuſements into three kinds, and we had yet conſidered only ſuch as were *noiſy* and *cruel*. I took the firſt opportunity to remind him, that he had left me ſtill in poſſeſſion of ſuch amuſements,

amuſements, as he called *trifling* and *ſeducing*.

I mean not however, ſaid he, to be more complaiſant to you on this head, than I have already been. I am afraid too many of our faſhionable amuſements will fall under my cenſure. What do you think, for inſtance, of *cards?*

I anſwered, I did indeed ſuppoſe he would point one of his firſt batteries againſt them.

It was plain then, he told me, that I thought they deſerved to be aſſaulted.

I know

I know not, ſaid I, Sir, whether I thought quite ſo ill of them. I have always been accuſtomed to think, that moderately uſed, they were an innocent amuſement even for a clergyman.

But pray, ſaid the Dean, in examining the propriety or impropriety, the innocence or guilt, of an action, are you to conſider how it affects yourſelf alone; or how it affects the public in general?

No doubt, I replied, a public-ſpirited man will conſider his actions in reference to the public.

He

He certainly ought, ſaid the Dean; and this being allowed, do you not conſider the preſent rage for card-playing, through all ranks of people, as a public evil?

I replied, it was, no doubt, an amuſement much abuſed: but the abuſe, I thought, lay only at the door of the abuſer. Meat and drink were abuſed—dreſs was abuſed—the Bible itſelf was abuſed: but we muſt have theſe things notwithſtanding.

Aye, there, returned the Dean, you point out the true diſtinction. You anſwer yourſelf. We *muſt* have the one; but *need not* have the other.

Does

Does it follow, becauſe we *muſt* have meat and drink, though they are abuſed, that we muſt neceſſarily have cards alſo?——If then cards be allowed to be a public evil; and we are, at the ſame time, under *no neceſſity* to have them, every conſcientious man would give up a thing ſo trifling (as an amuſement is at beſt,) to avert that evil: and by refraining, he certainly does avert it, as far as his own influence and example reach.

You do not mean, ſaid I, Sir, that cards are in themſelves eſſentially bad?

Why,

Why, no, ſaid he. Cards *in themſelves* may afford as innocent amuſement as any thing elſe. And yet I know not whether this conceſſion is not too much. I have been uſed myſelf to conſider amuſements under the head of ſuch as are ſtrictly ſocial; and of ſuch as contain in them a principle adverſe to ſociety. Many amuſements are of the former kind; but cards, and ſome other games, in which one party muſt be victorious, and the other ſubdued, encourage a kind of principle ſomewhat oppoſite to the ſocial temper: and the many little ſquabbles, even among friends, at ſuch games, prove the truth of my remark. However, if we could

play

play with ſuch moderation, as occaſioned no heart-burning, I ſhould be inclined to wave *this objection*; and conſider chiefly the *exceſs*. It is this indeed which creates the great miſchief; and the *example* ſpreads it. If cards are played at in the parlour, they deſcend to the kitchen: and from your parlour and kitchen, to thoſe of your neighbour, and ſo on. The luſt of card-playing is now become ſo flagitious, that every ſerious man, I affirm, ought to withdraw his own example from ſo general, and pernicious a practice. The clergyman, in particular, ſhould dread to ſanction, what has certainly

ſo bad an effect on the manners of the people.

But, ſaid I, Sir, my example is of ſo little weight, that it cannot make things either better or worſe.

There is not, replied the Dean, with ſome warmth, in the whole magazine of falſe reaſoning, a more deſtructive mode of it, than this. I will not ſet a good example, becauſe I know another will not follow it. So nobody will ſet a good example. We have better rules ſurely, to direct us, than the practice of other people. When a man thus puts his own practice and example into the hands of

others,

others, and depends upon his neighbour's conduct to regulate his own, what reformation can we expect? If we are right, under ſuch circumſtances, it is by chance. Every man's example has its influence, more or leſs, which he ſhould endeavour, for the ſake of good order, to make as inſtructive as he can, without troubling himſelf with the example of others. In families, where cards are never introduced in the parlour, I dare take upon me to ſay they are rarely ſeen in the kitchen; except perhaps where ſervants have already learned their leſſon in card-playing families. And if the obligation to avoid ſetting a bad example, in this inſtance,

be

be *general*, it binds the *eccleſiaſtic* with double force. He ſhould certainly be the *ſalt of the earth*; and endeavour to keep every thing, as far as he can, from corruption. Conſider what a change even that might effect. There are perhaps twenty or thirty thouſand eccleſiaſtics of different denominations, ſcattered about the various parts of England. If each of theſe influence a dozen, which (including their own families) is no extraordinary calculation, conſider what a party would be gained over. Each of theſe again, we may ſuppoſe, might have ſome influence; and if we may adopt our Saviour's alluſion, we might hope to ſee it work

like leaven, through the whole maſs. At leaſt, we might hope to ſee cards confined within the gloomy walls of gaming-houſes, and night-cellars.

But ſhould we not, ſaid I, Sir, *begin* our reformation at theſe places? If we could get rid of gaming-houſes, and night-cellars, which the high, and low vulgar frequent, cards might perhaps be leſt to us ſober people as an innocent amuſement.

Not ſo entirely, my good friend, anſwered the Dean. It is not only when cards are carried to this pernicious height, that I except againſt them. Indeed, when a man has taken his

his degrees at a gaming table, I have done with him. He is beyond receiving inſtruction from me. I muſt therefore inform you, that I do not confine the gaming-table to what is called ſo (as they ſay) κατ' εξοχην. I rank under that head all thoſe ſcenes of profligacy, ſcattered, not only through the metropolis, but through every part of the country, where high ſtakes are pledged, and well-dreſſed people meet, not ſo much with a view of amuſement, as with a purpoſe to pillage one another.—Theſe however are only the *exceſſes* of card-playing; but for various other reaſons the very practice itſelf ſhould be diſcouraged.—In the beſt light, I

think, cards afford only a frivolous, and ſeducing amuſement; eſpecially to a clergyman.—They often lead him into more expence, ſtill ſhort of what may be called *gaming*, than may be prudent for him to incur. Once engaged in the habit of playing, or liſted, if I may ſo phraſe it, into the corps of card-players, he cannot ſometimes avoid venturing higher ſtakes than he could wiſh.—But ſuppoſe he keep the ſcales of loſs and gain pretty even, (as I have ſometimes heard the moderate card-player boaſt) what ſhall we ſay for the expence of time? Here comes in a very ſeducing part. Evening after evening is loſt. The afternoon

is

is often added. Habits are formed. Play and comfort are connected; and the day ends in joyleſs vacancy, that does not conclude with cards.—Beſides, you give yourſelf into the hands of others. It is unſocial to break up a party. You are not therefore maſter of yourſelf.—Then again, conſider, you cannot chooſe your company. You are a known card-player; you cannot ſtand out, when a hand is wanted, and muſt often conſort with thoſe you diſeſteem.—Perhaps you yourſelf become a corrupter. The card-player muſt have company. He cannot follow his occupation alone: and when he gets old in his habits, he

ſeduces, where ſeduction is neceſſary, every one, over whom he has influence, to join him in his idle employment.—Above all, young people ſhould conſider, how eaſily, where amuſements are concerned, the mind glides into habits of indulgence. In theſe journies of pleaſure, ſtep follows ſtep mechanically. I knew a young lady thus debauched into a card-player, though ſhe was once among the moſt amiable of her ſex—domeſtic—ingenious—fond of books—full of reſources, and never at a loſs for the employment of her time. Family amuſements were all the pleaſures ſhe fought. Her father and mother were excellent people; and brought her

up,

up, an only daughter, in, what I may juſtly call, the cheerful reſtraints of religion. But during a ſhort viſit at a relation's, to which her father reluctantly conſented, ſhe unhappily got a taſte for card-playing; and, when ſhe returned home, did not much enjoy thoſe innocent domeſtic circles, in which, before, ſhe had given, and received, ſo much pleaſure. In ſhort, ſhe had loſt her heart to this vile amuſement. Soon afterwards ſhe married a young gentleman of fortune—ſober, virtuous, and modeſt; but of talents very inferior to thoſe of his wife. With diſcretion ſhe might have modelled her family, as ſhe had pleaſed; and had an excel-

lent example before her, in her father's: but ſhe choſe rather to corrupt her huſband, and turn his manſion into a gaming-houſe.—I mention this inſtance as one among a hundred I have ſeen in my life, to ſhew the rapid progreſs of pleaſurable habits, and thoſe of cards beyond all others; to which I think particularly belongs that excellent adage, *Principiis obſta.*

But ſince, ſaid I, Sir, we are often obliged to conſort with thoſe, whom we diſeſteem, or with thoſe, whoſe minds are too unfurniſhed to bear a part in converſation, is it not uſeful, and often neceſſary, to introduce

 ſomething,

ſomething, that removes, for the time at leaſt, all diſguſt—ſomething that may level thoſe, who have not ſenſe, with thoſe who have; and enable them to paſs their time together in mutual civility, without labouring to ſupport a converſation, which moſt probably more than half of them are utterly unable to ſupport?

This is the firſt time, ſaid the Dean ſmiling, I ever heard cards mentioned as a bond of benevolence. As the cauſe of ill-humour, and diſſenſion, I have often heard them taxed. But I ſuppoſe you do not hold the argument ſeriouſly. You cannot imagine cards to be more effectual to this

end,

end, than even thoſe modes of general civility, which commonly reign among polite people; and check, during the intercourſe, all appearance of ſuch little hoſtilities, as may rankle within. At leaſt you muſt allow, that card-playing is not quite a clerical mode of inculcating benevolence.—And as to your ſolicitude to lower the man of wit and ſenſe to a level with his neighbours, and bring converſation to an equilibrium, I think it ill-judged. If the man of ſenſe have any good-nature in his compoſition, he will not be much hurt at beſtowing on his weaker neighbour a pittance of his own information, and wiſdom. At

leaſt,

leaſt, it is not well done in you to furniſh him with an apology to withhold it. How is the poor man to improve, if on his coming into company, an immediate ſtop is put to all converſation by calling for cards?—However, I conſider this argument only as a ſhuffle. Any converſation is ſurely better, than the dull monotony of a card-table. He who can bear the converſation of a card player, ſhould not affect being out of humour with any other converſation. For myſelf, I proteſt I ſhould make better company of a parrot.

I cannot, ſaid I, truly ſay much for

the converſation of a card-table, except that it is innocent, and may keep converſation from taking a worſe turn.

Why, yes, ſaid the Dean, and ſo it would, if you ſhould clap a gag into every body's mouth, when he went into company. At the ſame time I ſhould lay but little ſtreſs either on one expedient, or the other. A ſhort *reſtraint* affords no *amendment*. Bring the axe to the root of the tree—correct the heart—and you do ſomething. But till that be done, the propenſity to ſcandal may be *checked*, but will find its opportunity to *break out*, whether you are a card player,

or not. Perhaps, like fermenting liquor, it may burſt out with more violence from having been confined.

But, ſaid I, Sir, is it not worth conſideration, whether people may not employ their vacant time worſe, if they do not employ it on cards?

I know not how they can employ it worſe, anſwered the Dean, if you reſpect their amuſements only. And if you think cards will keep a young fellow from the ſtews or a debauch, when he is inclined to either, I fear you attribute much more to them, than they deſerve. If a man be

fond

fond of two games, both are amuſements; and ſo far as there is a ſimilitude between them, the love of one may perhaps overpower an attachment to the other. But when a man is fond of a *game*, and addicted to a *vice*, as there is no ſimilitude between the objects, you have no more ground for expecting the former will drive out the latter, than for ſuppoſing a man's dancing a minuet ſhould prevent his admiring a picture.

You force me, ſaid I, Sir, out of all my ſtrong holds: but you muſt give me leave to make one obſervation more. I have heard ſickly people

ſpeak

ſpeak of cards as a great relief in pain; when the mind is incapable of any other attention. And if exciting this frivolous attention will draw it from attending to its malady, cards, I think, are an opium, and may often be called a bleſſing.

Aye, aye, replied the Dean, I have certainly no objection to their being uſed medicinally. But then I ſhould wiſh to have them ſold only at the apothecary's ſhop, and the doctor to preſcribe the uſe of them. I ſhould fear, if the patient preſcribe for himſelf, he may be apt to take too large a doſe, as he often does of laudanum, and other anodyne drugs. I once knew

knew an old lady, who had loſt the uſe of her ſpeech, and of both her hands, by two or three paralytic ſtrokes; and every evening took the remedy you have been preſcribing. She was a lady of large fortune—gave good ſuppers—and had generally a number of humble friends about her, one of whom always, after ſupper, dealt, ſorted, and held her cards, and pointing to this, or that, the old lady nodded at the card ſhe wiſhed to have her friend play. But it ſometimes happened, that the paralytic ſhake of the head was miſtaken for the nod of approbation, and unfortunately a wrong card was played; which threw the old lady (whoſe whole heart was

in

in the remedy ſhe was taking) into ſuch violent fits of paſſion, that people thought ſhe received more injury from theſe irritations, than benefit from the preſcription.

I fear, ſaid I, Sir, from all this ridicule, you thought what I advanced, rather impertinent.

My ridicule, replied the Dean, was not ſurely directed at you; but at thoſe poor melancholy objects, who cannot, even at the cloſe of life, be happy without their cards. I have heard of many ſuch;—and have known ſome.—I once called on a neighbouring clergyman (it is now

many years ago) whom I found, not indeed abſolutely dying; but ſo ill, that it was thought he never could recover. I was then in haſte; but finding him deſirous of my company, I promiſed to drink tea with him in the afternoon. When I came, I found he had invited two other clergymen to meet us. As I knew them both to be men of ſenſe and learning, I expected to ſpend a very pleaſant evening. But how great was my ſurprize, when the tea-table being removed, the card-table was introduced; to which they ſat down as to a thing of courſe. I was the only young man among them, having only juſt taken orders: but I

was

was ſo ſtruck with this mode of adminiſtering conſolation to a dying man, and with the ſtrange indecorum of drawing a young clergyman into ſuch improprieties, that I knew not what to do. I heſitated: but the text came into my head, *rebuke not an elder*; and not having time, in the moment, to conſider circumſtances, I ſat down. But the thing made ſuch an impreſſion on me, that from that day to this, I have obſtinately perſiſted in never touching a card. At a time, when ſerious thought and meditation are the moſt becoming, it is pitiable, in the laſt degree, to ſee the dregs of life running off in ſo wretched a man-

ner. If there is any thing in human nature, which unites contempt, and commiſeration, ſaid a friend of mine (coming from a ſight of this kind) it is the ſpectacle of a man going down to the grave with a pack of cards in his hand!

Indeed, ſaid I, Sir, theſe frightful examples are of themſelves ſufficient warnings—But I have done. I was willing to ſay what I could for an amuſement, in which I fear I have had too great an intereſt. But I hope, Sir, I ſhall not be the worſe either for your ridicule, or your inſtruction.—After all however it muſt be confeſſed, that we young

clergymen

clergymen have a difficult part to act. The prevalence of cuſtom is a vehement tide, which we find it very hard to ſtem.

I ſhould therefore, ſaid the Dean, wiſh you to keep out of it; which every man may, if he pleaſe. Be reſolute at firſt in reſiſting importunity, and importunity will preſently ceaſe. You will ſoon be conſidered as one who has a will of his own.—The clergy, I think, may be divided into two great bodies. One claſs are ſuch as enter into the miniſtry only to make their fortunes. Theſe are a kind of amphibious animals. I cannot call them clergymen.

They are traders in eccleſiaſtical goods. With them my arguments have nothing to do. They have no ſcruples; and will comply of courſe with every thing that will recommend them to the world.—In the other claſs are many, no doubt, who have the end and honour of their profeſſion at heart: and wiſh only to be convinced of the propriety or impropriety of a thing, to do it, or leave it undone. But there are numbers, I fear, in this claſs, well-meaning, on the whole, and ſerious men, who are yet ready to make the cuſtoms of the world an apology for a variety of improper practices; and ſlide into a number of corrupt habits, without

conſidering

conſidering that to oppoſe the ſeducing cuſtoms of the world is the very eſſence of a ſtate of trial; and that it is the very buſineſs of a good paſtor to ſet up his own example as a way-mark againſt them.

To all this I fully aſſented.

Aye, Mr. Frampton, continued the Dean, with much earneſtneſs in his manner, theſe are ſerious truths. The cuſtoms of the world put a gloſs upon many improper things—among which I conſider cards—and miſlead numbers, who are glad perhaps to miſinterpret the apoſtle, and tell you, that if they

do them not, *they muſt altogether go out of the world.* But whatever liberties the layman takes (and yet I know not what gives him any excluſive liberty) the clergyman ought to be particularly guarded againſt the indulgence of any amuſement, which is fraught with ſo much miſchief, both public and private; which ſo eaſily gains ground by the force of habit; and in the defence of which, you ſee, ſo little can be ſaid. Many bad habits ſubſide in age. Nature cannot hold out. But here is a miſchievous propenſity, which cleaves often to our very laſt ſand. It is poſſible, I may yet live to ſee people ſo barefaced, as to make no diſtinction of days, and

play

play at cards on Sundays. It is practiſed, I am informed, in France, from which we derive too many of our faſhions.

I told the Dean, that, as I believed I was better acquainted with the hiſtory of card playing, than he was, I was afraid that vile practice, though not frequent, had gotten at leaſt ſome footing among *us*. One inſtance I knew. I had, not long ago, the honour to be admitted, in a dearth of better company, to the card-table of a lady of faſhion. Soon after I found ſhe played on Sundays; when, fearing leſt I ſhould be involved in the imputation of that practice, I ne-

ver would touch another card at her houſe. On her calling me to account for deſerting my poſt, I plainly told her the reaſon. This led to a ſhort debate. She ſaid, after the duties of the day were over (for ſhe was a conſtant church-woman) ſhe thought a little recreation in the evening was very allowable. I talked of the great *impropriety* at leaſt of *breaking down fences*, and laying the practice open to the common people, even though ſhe would not allow any profanation of the day. She thought the fault lay in the cattle, that *went through the broken fence*. At length however ſhe allowed that *cards on a Sunday* were very improper *among the lower peo-*

ple

ple—and farther, that, when *carried to the height of gaming*, they were a very improper Sunday-amuſement to *any one*. I begged ſhe would ſuffer me to ſhew her, merely on *theſe two conceſſions of her own*, the miſchief of introducing cards *at all* on a Sunday. And, that ſhe might ſee it in the ſtronger light, I offered to put my arguments on paper. But I could never obtain leave. She always ſtopped my mouth with ſaying, ſhe had made up her mind, and wiſhed to hear no more on the ſubject.

I honour you, ſaid the Dean, as I ſhould every young clergyman, who could

could make ſo proper a ſtand againſt a vicious faſhion. I did not indeed know, and am much hurt to hear, that this vile practice has at all gotten footing amongſt us. I thought the Sabbath, though not obſerved as it ought to be, had never been proſtituted in this ſhameleſs manner. The Sabbath is certainly the great mean of keeping alive the little religion we have; and much have they to anſwer for, who contribute at all, but eſpecially in this flagrant manner, to deſtroy its reverence among the people.

I think ſo truly, ſaid I, Sir; and the rather as I believe the common people

people yet hold ſuch profligacy in deteſtation. A genteel family took a ſummer-lodging, not long ago, in a country-town, where I happened then to reſide: and I remember one Sunday (the day being hot) the windows were thrown open, and exhibited them ſitting round a card-table. But the mob, provoked at ſuch impudence, gathered about the houſe, and in very intelligible language, gave them to underſtand, that if the card-table was not immediately removed, they would take their own method to remove it.

I am no friend, ſaid the Dean, to

the

the juriſdiction of a mob; but in this caſe, I could ſay with the poet,

Interdum vulgus rectum videt——

In return for your account of this very impudent piece of effrontery, I will tell you a ſtory of genuine ſimplicity. A friend of mine had a curate, recommended from Cambridge, an excellent young man, who had never been in a ſcrape during the whole time he had been at the univerſity. He was addicted to no improper amuſement; and cards in particular he diſliked. It happened, however, on ſome ſingular occaſion (I believe on that of a young lady's coming of age) he was invited among ſeveral other young folks

folks to ſpend an evening, where cards made a part of the entertainment. He ſtood out ſtrenuouſly, as wholly ignorant of every game. At laſt ſome *general game* * (I know not what they call it) being propoſed, and ſome of the company (as corrupters are always at hand) inſtructing him in what he could not but feel he had powers of mind to comprehend, he was drawn in, and ſat down, though little attentive to the buſineſs in which he was engaged.

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* We have among us at preſent a kind of game, which is called a *round game*, from the company's ſitting *round* a table. The Dean probably alludes to ſome ſuch game as this, which might be in uſe in his time.

At

At the end of the game, when the accounts of profit and loſs were ſettled, his companions gave him four ſhillings, to his great ſurpriſe, for certain little ivory fiſh, which he had received in the courſe of the game. The next morning, when he told the ſtory, he ſaid, it was fortunate he had been ſucceſsful; for if he had loſt four ſhillings, inſtead of winning them, he ſhould certainly have gone off without paying his debt; as he had not the leaſt conception, that the ivory fiſh he had received, repreſented any thing but themſelves.

I am convinced, ſaid I, Sir, there

is great force in every thing you have ſaid; and I ſhall always conſider cards as a very dangerous, and enſnaring amuſement.—But ſtill, I think, your arguments regard chiefly *the exceſs*. Many occaſions may occur, on which a man would wiſh to break through a general rule. There are few rules, however right on the whole, which do not admit exceptions. An *habitual card-player* deſerves every rebuke you can give him. But perhaps you will not be ſo ſevere with a prudent *occaſional* one, though he ſhould even be a clergyman.

I am ſorry, my young friend, re-

plied the Dean with a ſerious air, you have ſo ſoon forgotten the grand argument I uſed againſt a clergyman's having any concern at all with cards as an amuſement. I endeavoured to ſhew you, that, as cards were become ſo *general an evil*, the clergy, who ſhould conſider themſelves as *the ſalt of the earth*, ſhould endeavour to purify this maſs, inſtead of mixing with it. If they encourage the practice of card-playing by their own example, they certainly hold the public good very cheap, when they cannot give up ſo trifling a thing as an amuſement, to promote it. They certainly ought, were it merely for the *chance* of promoting it.—

it.—As for your being an advocate, added the Dean, for *occaſional playing*, though every thing I have ſaid ſhould go for nothing, I think ſuch *qualifying* is of little uſe. You cannot well play *occaſionally*. You muſt either reſolve never to play, or be at every body's beck. If you are known *occaſionally* to play, you will be thought a *ſurly fellow*, if you ever refuſe, becauſe it depends entirely on your own inclination; and a good-natured man will always be ready to give up his own inclination to pleaſe others.—But if you are known *never to play*, nobody can take offence. So that, in fact, there ſeems to be no medium between playing, *whenever*

you are aſked, and *never playing at all.*

I felt ſo much aſhamed at having ſo ſoon forgotten the good Dean's grand argument, with regard *to the public*, that I was too much abaſhed to make any immediate reply.

He obſerved my confuſion: but without taking notice of it, after a little pauſe, he obligingly continued his diſcourſe.—Well, ſaid he, Mr. Frampton, having thus diſpatched the card-table, let us go next to the *play-houſe*. What a noble inſtitution have we here, if it were properly regulated! I know of nothing

thing that is better calculated for moral inſtruction — nothing that holds the glaſs more forcibly to the follies and vices of mankind. I would have it go, hand in hand, with the pulpit. It has nothing indeed to do with Chriſtian doctrines. The *pageants*, as, I think, they were called, of the laſt century, uſed to repreſent ſcripture-ſtories, which were very improperly introduced, and much better handled in the pulpit. But it is impoſſible for the pulpit to repreſent vice and folly in ſo ſtrong a light as the ſtage. One addreſſes our reaſon, the other our imagination; and we know which receives commonly the more forcible impreſſion. There

ſhould always however be a little daſh of the *caricature* to give a zeſt to *character*. But nature and probability ſhould be ſtrictly obſerved. I remember—it is now, I believe, thirty years ago—ſeeing a play acted, in which an old fellow is repreſented dallying with a coquettiſh girl. It was an admirable picture from nature. The ſprightly actions of youth imitated by the ridiculous geſticulations of age, ſtruck my fancy ſo forcibly, that the picture is yet as freſh, as if it had been painted yeſterday.—As *moral repreſentations*, I cannot ſay, I think Shakeſpear's plays are models. There is a fund of nature in them—vaſt invention

—and

—and a variety of paſſions admirably coloured. I wiſh I could forget the looſe fancy, which wantons through moſt of them, and is extremely diſagreeable to a chaſte ear. But what I chiefly remark, is, that I do not *commonly* find in them (what I ſhould wiſh to find in *every* play) ſome virtue, or good quality, ſet in an amiable light; or ſome vice, or folly, ſet in a deteſtable one; and made, as it were, the burden of the whole. I call the ſcenes of Falſtaff admirable copies from nature; but I know not what inſtruction they give. Now I ſhould wiſh to turn the play-houſe into a mode of amuſing inſtruction; and to ſuffer no theatrical perform-

ance, which did not eminently conduce to this end. Young men, for inſtance, are apt to be led away by vicious pleaſures; and to ſupply their profligacy, are often carried from one degree of wickedneſs to another. A play on ſuch a ſubject * might perhaps deter many a young man in the beginning of his career. Or a good effect might be produced by placing ſome virtue in oppoſition to its contrary vice; as *contraſts* generally have more force, than *ſimple exhibitions.*

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* There was afterwards a play formed on this very plan, intitled, George Barnwell; the moral of which is good, though the execution is far from being faultleſs.

I aſked

I aſked the Dean, if he meant to exclude comedy from his theatre?

By no means, ſaid he: I ſhould rather encourage it more than tragedy; inaſmuch as I ſhould have more hope of curing ſuch vices, and follies, as require the laſh, than ſuch as require the gibbet. My ſtage-authors ſhould deal much in ridicule, which, well conducted, not thrown on individuals, but caſt broadly on vice, and folly, I conceive to be an admirable engine. But I ſhould not ridicule a ſquinting eye—a ſtammering voice—a provincial dialect—the peculiarities of a profeſſion—or indeed

indeed any oddity, or deformity, that was not ſtrictly immoral.

I am afraid, ſaid I, Sir, you will cut off much of our modern wit by this ſeverity: for theſe oddities are, in general, a great ſource of it. The broken Engliſh of a Frenchman—the blunders of an Iriſhman—or the broad dialect of a Scotſman, are what our modern theatres are taught to believe very witty. I ſhall however (to ſpeak for one) think myſelf much obliged to you for ridding the ſtage of all this trumpery of falſe wit and humour; and bringing only ſuch ridiculous characters forward, as can *ſupport themſelves*, if I may ſo ſpeak,

by their follies.—But there is one thing, which, I fear, will incapacitate the ſtage from being of much uſe in the reformation of manners. The ſcenery, the dreſſes, the muſick, and other appendages of the theatre, make the expence ſo great, that it can never be brought to a level with the pockets of the multitude.

That is well urged, ſaid the Dean. I thank you for the hint, and will immediately model my dramatic repreſentations in conformity to it.—We have one church for rich, and poor. All pay equal homage to one God—all are equally his creatures—and it is fit we ſhould all worſhip him in

one

one place.—But though we have only one church, there is no neceſſity to have only one theatre. In my Utopia, therefore, I mean to eſtabliſh two—one for the higher—the other for the lower orders of the community. In the firſt, of courſe, there will be more elegance, and more expence; and the drama muſt be ſuited to the audience by the repreſentation of ſuch vices, and follies, as are found chiefly among the great. The other theatre ſhall be equally ſuited to the lower orders. And to enable them the better to partake of the moral amuſement provided for them, I mean to aboliſh all tumbling — dancing — bear-baiting, and every thing elſe,

that

that tends only to encourage *merriment without inſtruction.*

You have now, ſaid I, Sir, perfectly ſatisfied me. I ſhall heartily rejoice in the erection of your two theatres. And it gives me great delight to hear you ſpeak ſo favourably of the drama. I own, if there is any one amuſement, which appears to me ſuperior to all others, it is to ſee a good play, well acted.

But hold, ſaid the Dean: you underſtand, I hope, that I give this commendation only to theatres of my own regulating; not to ſuch as at preſent

preſent exiſt. With a few exceptions, I think I may deſcribe the drama of the preſent age *, as having nothing leſs in its view, than good morals. Amorous ſcenes — vicious principles — the moſt indelicate language — debauched characters ſet off in agreeable colours — ſcoffs thrown out againſt religion, and morals — with light muſic tending to ſoften the mind, and make it ſtill more ſuſceptible of thoſe vile incentives, that had already been excited, are too much,

* It muſt be obſerved, that the drama of that age was exceedingly corrupt. Charles the Second had introduced great licence into the theatre. Bad as the ſtage ſtill is in this reſpect, it is much chaſter than it was then.

I fear,

I fear, the ingredients of our theatrical amuſements. At beſt, our plays exhibit in general, very falſe repreſentations of life.—So oppoſite to all its real walks, that the imaginations of young people eſpecially, are carried beyond their proper ſphere; and are amuſed, and prepoſſeſſed with romantic ideas of ſituations, in which they never can be placed. And even, if the play were good, and tended to give the thoughts any virtuous impreſſion, the light farce, coming after, would throw the whole at once out of the mind. All farces I ſhould recommend to my lower theatre. The ſtyle of all its compoſitions

poſitions ſhould be ſomewhat in this way. But they ſhould all certainly have a moral tendency. The farce, as at preſent uſed, is a moſt abſurd excreſcence; and I ſuppoſe intended merely to pleaſe the vulgar. As there is an upper gallery, the people there muſt be pleaſed, as well as thoſe in the boxes. But my two theatres will render this double mode of repreſentation unneceſſary.—In ſhort, if the ſtage were regulated as I could wiſh it, even clergymen almoſt might be actors upon it. As it is now managed, they cannot well, I think, be innocent ſpectators. Tacitus, I remember, ſomewhere ſpeaking of the modeſty of the German ladies, attributes

butes it in a great measure to their not being suffered to attend public diversions*. I should wish only to make one improvement on this German fashion, which is, neither to permit gentlemen nor ladies to attend them, till they are better regulated. The historian might have reference to the publick amusements of *his own* country; with which he thought it happy, the German ladies had no opportunities of being corrupted.

Whatever

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* The words of the original to which the Dean alludes, are, *Septa pudicitiæ agunt, nullis spectaculorum illecebris, nullis conviviorum irritationibus coruptæ.*

De Mor. German.

Edit. Gronov. p 401.

Whatever his preciſe meaning was, it ſhews his general opinion of ſuch amuſements: and, I ſuppoſe, you will allow Tacitus, though not an apoſtle, to be a very good judge of men, and manners.—Beſides, added the Dean, the very profeſſion of a player is rendered ſo diſreputable, that nobody ought to encourage it. Take the matter home with you. Would you wiſh either your ſon or daughter to ſeek a livelihood on the ſtage? If not, do you think it ſhews much moral rectitude to encourage in other people's children, what, on virtuous principles, you would ſhudder at in your own?

I told

I told the Dean, I durſt not take upon me to anſwer his invective either againſt the ſtage, or its profeſſors. I feared there was more truth in what he had ſaid, than I wiſhed to find. A clergyman, I obſerved, muſt often be in the way of hearing, and ſeeing improprieties; which he cannot avoid. But I allowed it certainly to be a different caſe, when he went *voluntarily* into the way of theſe things.——I then aſked the Dean, what he thought of *dancing-aſſemblies*, and cheerful meetings of other kinds?

As they are at preſent managed, ſaid the Dean, ſo far as I am ac-

quainted with them, I ſhould hardly allow a clergyman to attend any of them. Put them under my regulation, and he may attend them all.

For the ſake of truth, I replied, I muſt ſay, that I have attended the aſſemblies at our county-town, not conſtantly, indeed, but very frequently, and I do not remember ever ſeeing (except perhaps once, or twice) what the moſt exact perſon would call the leaſt breach of decorum, or good manners.

I know not, ſaid the Dean, what you preciſely mean by the leaſt breach of decorum: but before I ſhould give my

my ſanction to the aſſemblies at your county-town, I ſhould wiſh to aſk a few queſtions. Is all company, that are well dreſſed, promiſcuouſly admitted?—or admitted on the introduction of nobody can tell who?—Is there no vying in dreſs, and ornament, and faſhion?—Are no card-tables introduced?—Are ſuppers, and drinking, and late hours excluded?—While you are dancing, or carding, or drinking above ſtairs, is any care taken of your poor ſervants below?—Are they left to ſaunter about inn-yards and tap-houſes, to get into bad company—or, not knowing what to do with themſelves, to debauch one another? Unleſs you

can anſwer me rationally on all theſe heads, I ſhall never ſuffer any clergyman, over whom I have influence, to attend any of theſe meetings. It may be difficult perhaps to prevent the layman from filling the heads of his ſons and daughters with dreſs, and vanity, and folly, and intrigue, and all the impertinence that attends ſuch promiſcuous, ill-regulated aſſemblies — we muſt leave him, if he pleaſe, to ſet them an example himſelf, and go before them in all theſe ſcenes of diſſipation—we muſt leave him alſo to take no more care of the morals of his ſervants, than if they were his cattle; and to pay

no attention to the difficulties, into which he leads them. If he will run into theſe *exceſſes*, (I have no better word in my dictionary to explain my meaning) I cannot prevent it: but certainly I ſhould wiſh the clergyman to be very cautious how he gives any encouragement to ſuch aſſemblies by his example. The world may laugh at him: but he muſt learn to bear the ridicule of the world; and I hope in return he will meet approbation elſewhere.

But, ſaid I, Sir, I have often heard, that prudent fathers and mothers conſider theſe meetings, as places where

their daughters are ſeen to moſt advantage.

Aye, replied the Dean, I have lately heard that argument maintained, in all the plenitude of its folly, by one of thoſe prudent mothers; to whom I was weak enough to give my advice on this head, for the ſake of an amiable god-daughter of mine. I hate the idea of carrying young women, like colts, to a fair. It is indelicate: it is below their dignity. They ſhould not ſeek; but be ſought after. Few happy marriages, I believe, are founded on theſe haſty impreſſions.—I ſhall not, however, ſay more on this point, as I am not

inſtructing

inſtructing the world at large; but only giving advice to my brethren of the clergy. Let the beau ſuit himſelf with a belle, and chooſe a wife from the made-up young ladies, who are taught to ſay ſmart things, and ſhine at aſſemblies; and whoſe heads are fuller of faſhions, than of ſuch knowledge as moſt becomes them. But when the clergyman thinks it prudent to change his condition, let him look for a wife in ſome domeſtic family; and endeavour to chooſe one, whom he hears ſober people commend for her private virtues. And if ſhe happen to be known in any polite circle, and dignified by the name of a *lifeleſs, inanimate thing*,

he

he has ſtill the better chance for happineſs.

As I was always fond of dancing, I did not care to let the argument wholly drop; and told the Dean, I hoped he had no diſlike to dancing in *itſelf*; but only when it was improperly circumſtanced. It appeared to me a very innocent winter-evening amuſement.

It appears ſo to me, ſaid the Dean. I have already told you, that if you will ſuffer me to regulate your dancings, and other evening-meetings, I will freely indulge you in them.—Summon an aſſembly, when you

pleaſe,

pleaſe, at ſome *private* houſe. *Public* houſes always lead to promiſcuous company, and intemperance. Let the meeting conſiſt of well-educated, and well-diſpoſed young people of both ſexes; and when the muſic ſtrikes up, and the dance begins, ſend for me; and I will hobble away, as faſt as my gouty feet will allow; and if I may be permitted quietly to occupy a corner of the room in an elbow-chair, I ſhall enjoy the ſcene as much as any of you. To ſee youth and innocence made happy amidſt ſuch amuſements, as are ſuitable to them, always gives a new joy to my philanthropy; which is as ſuddenly damped, when I ſee them

entangled in pleaſures, which I cannot but look on, as ſecret ſnares for their innocence.—And yet I cannot ſay I ſhould wiſh to ſee a clergyman, except perhaps a very young one, more than a ſpectator of theſe amuſements. To ſee him to-day ſailing about in a minuet ſtep, and to-morrow preaching in a pulpit, might make a contraſt perhaps too ſtrong for ſome of his hearers. I do not, however, wiſh to determine preciſely. The amuſement is certainly innocent.——With regard to the other meetings you mention, if you put them under the ſame rational reſtraint, I have no objection to any of them. I ſhould be pleaſed to meet

a ſet

a ſet of virtuous, well-bred young men, or a mixed company, at dinner, or ſupper; and if their chief end were either converſation, or innocent amuſement, I ſhould do the beſt in my power to amuſe, and enliven them. Nor ſhould I expect them all to be men of agreeable manners, ingenuity, and information. I ſhould only indulge the hope of their having the ſame diſlike, that I had, to tranſgreſs the rules of decency and propriety.—But as for clubs met together on ſet purpoſe to be joyous—to drink, and to rattle—to ſing ſongs, and catches—to roar, and ſtagger, as the evening gets late, I hold them

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in abhorrence. No clergyman * ſhould ever join in ſuch orgies; and I ſhould think very meanly of him, if he ſhould frequent a company, that had the leaſt tendency to that riotous mirth, which produces theſe improprieties of behaviour.

You ſeemed to mention, ſaid I, Sir, with a mark of diſapprobation, ſongs,

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* Johnſon and his friend Beauclerk were in company with ſeveral clergymen, who thought they ſhould appear to advantage by aſſuming the lax jollity of men of the world. Johnſon, who, they expected, would be entertained, ſat grave, and ſilent for ſome time. At laſt, turning to Beauclerk, he ſaid, by no means in a whiſper, "The merriment of theſe parſons is mighty offenſive."

Boſ. Life, vol. iii. p. 328.

ſongs, and catches. Do you ſee any thing particularly miſchievous in them?

By no means, replied the Dean, when they are not found in bad company; and when the words are ſuch as neither countenance vice, nor violate decorum. If the ſelect aſſembly we juſt left dancing, chooſe to amuſe themſelves after their dance, or after ſupper, with ſinging, I ſhould not only approve it, but beg leave to liſten to them. Even the clergyman I will allow to ſing in ſuch an aſſembly; though I ſhould warmly reprove him, if he ſhould ſing for the entertainment of a mixed company,

or at a public meeting.—If I ſhould not be thought preciſe, or puritanical, I ſhould, now and then, recommend a pſalm-tune, eſpecially on a Sunday evening. We have ſeveral pſalm-tunes, which are very fine; and when ſung in parts by ſweet female voices, are, in my ear, more harmonious, than any other ſpecies of muſic; and in the language of our great, but unfaſhionable poet *,

Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to heaven.

—At the ſame time, I cannot ſay, I am a friend to inſtrumental muſic on

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* At that day Milton, on the account of his political principles, was not in general eſteem.

a Sun-

a Sunday-evening; from no objection to the thing itſelf, (though, indeed, I think harmonious voices ſweeter, when unaccompanied) but I ſhould fear its being miſconſtrued by undiſtinguiſhing people, to whom we ſhould always be careful not to give offence. Pſalms are ſung in churches, and can lead into no miſtake: but fiddles, and flutes, and harpſichords are merry inſtruments, and, in ſome people's opinion, can never be accommodated to purpoſes of devotion *.—As to *catches*, I know little of

* Occiduus is a paſtor of renown.
When he has prayed, and preached the ſabbath down,

of them: but from what I do know, they make no attempt either at ſenſe, or ſentiment. The harmony may be good; and if the words, though ſenſeleſs, have no ill-meaning, I ſhall not reprobate, though I cannot commend them.

Having

With wire, and catgut he concludes the day,
Quav'ring and ſemiquav'ring thought away.
The full concerto ſwells upon your ear;
All elbows ſhake.——
Will not the ſicklieſt ſheep of every flock
Reſort to this example?——
If apoſtolic gravity be free
To play the fool on Sundays, why not we?
If he the tinkling harpſichord regards
As inoffenſive, what offence in cards?
Strike up the fiddles, let us all be gay:
Laymen have leave to dance, if parſons play.

COWPER.

Having diſpatched, ſaid the Dean, all our *riotous*, and *cruel* amuſements, and likewiſe ſuch as are *trifling*, and *ſeducing*, (though they often, as in ſome inſtances juſt obſerved, intermingle with each other) I ſhould now introduce you to ſuch amuſements, as I think proper for a clergyman: but as the evening grows late, we will take an earlier hour, if you pleaſe, to-morrow, to diſcuſs them.

END OF THE SECOND DIALOGUE.

THIRD DIALOGUE.

THE next day was Sunday, when I happened to be wholly engaged. But on Monday I waited on the good Dean ſoon after dinner.

I am impatient, ſaid I, Sir, to have another converſation with you. You have taken away my gun, and dog. You have prohibited my playing at cards, and have refuſed me leave to go to an aſſembly, or to meet my friend

friend at a tavern; and I cannot but be ſolicitous to know, what amuſement you will at length allow me.

But are not you, replied the Dean, rather unreaſonable? I have indeed taken your gun. But as to your dog, you may keep him, if you pleaſe, for a companion. I have no objection. Have I not at leaſt *connived* alſo at your fiſhing, though I cannot recommend it? Have I not introduced you to many agreeable ſocieties? Have I not given you leave to ſing and to dance? And does not all this ſatisfy you? However, I mean ſtill to do more. I

wiſh only to make your amuſements — your habits — your company — your dreſs — and your profeſſion, all agree.—By the way, I am not a little ſolicitous about the dreſs of a clergyman; which I think a matter of more conſequence, than the generality of people will perhaps allow. I think it an argument of great lightneſs in a clergyman to endeavour, as far as he can, to adopt the lay-habit. He ſhews he has embraced his own profeſſion only for reaſons of convenience; and in his heart diſlikes its reſtraints. I ſhould wiſh to have every clergyman, eſpecially when in full orders, obliged

obliged to appear always in a ſhort caſſock, under his coat. He could not then ſo eaſily adopt impropriеties in his dreſs; and might be more upon his guard alſo againſt improprieties in his behaviour. His clerical habit would be a continual call upon him for decorum at leaſt, as he durſt not, in that garb, do many things, which, dreſſed like a layman, he might be tempted to do. Beſides, it might tend to keep ſuch young men out of the church, as, when in it, are a diſgrace both to it, and to themſelves. Cloathing was originally intended for the ſake of decency, and warmth. In civilized ſocieties, it became afterwards of uſe to

diſtinguiſh ranks: and if in this inſtance the diſtinction were a little more enforced, it would, I am perſuaded, have a good effect.

I hope, Sir, ſaid I, that my wardrobe, if it were all produced before you, would give you no offence. Nothing would be found there, but what is ſtrictly clerical. Indeed I myſelf have been often highly offended at the improper dreſs of many of my younger brethren. I wonder not, therefore, at *your* being offended.

So far then, anſwered the Dean, I may preſume upon you, as a hopeful diſciple; and that, as you are cleri-

cal in your dreſs, you will be clerical alſo in your amuſements.—Now as *exerciſe*, on which health ſo much depends, is one great end of amuſement, and as the clerical life may in general be called a ſedentary one, he who provides amuſements for a clergyman, ſhould have an eſpecial view to exerciſe. But though I forbade the clergyman to gallop after hounds, I have no objection to his mounting his horſe, and riding a dozen miles, in a morning, for exerciſe.

But without ſome end in view, I obſerved, few people were fond of a ſolitary ride.

Solitary

Solitary ride! exclaimed the Dean. Have you forgotten the philoſopher's noble adage, *Nunquam minus ſolus, quam cum ſolus?* I ſhould allow a man brought up in buſineſs to urge ſuch a pretence: but in a ſcholar I cannot admit it. The very trot of a horſe is friendly to thought. It beats time, as it were, to a mind engaged in deep ſpeculation. An old acquaintance of mine uſed to find its effect ſo ſtrong, that he valued his horſe for being a little given to ſtumbling. I know not how far, he would ſay, I might carry my contemplation, and totally forget myſelf, if my honeſt beaſt did not, now and then, by a falſe ſtep, jog me out

of

of my reverie; and let me know, that I had not yet gotten above a mile or two out of my road *.

But every ſcholar, ſaid I, Sir, has not the art of keeping his thoughts ſo collected. The trotting of a horſe, even without ſtumbling, may be enough to diſſipate his beſt meditations.

If he cannot think in one way, anſwered the Dean, let him think in another. If he cannot lay premiſes and

* This ſtory was afterwards told of Dr. Young—not the author of the Night-thoughts; but another clergyman of that name, remarkable for ſimplicity of character, and abſence of mind.

and concluſions together, and make a ſermon; let him conſider ſome letter he has to write—or ſome conference with a neighbour to manage. He muſt be a very thoughtleſs fellow, if he have not ſome uſeful topic to engage his thoughts. Or perhaps he may have ſome friend to call upon. At worſt, he may amuſe himſelf with looking at the country around him. It is a pleaſure to ſee how differently the corn, or the graſs grows in different pariſhes; and to mark its progreſs in different ſoils, and different expoſures. Every ſeaſon furniſhes ſome new, and agreeable ſcene. He ſees the woods aſſume one appearance in the ſpring—

another

another in ſummer—a third in autumn—and a fourth in winter. And as nature is never at a ſtand, he ſees a continual variation in her ſcenes. So that, if he have no reſources in himſelf, he may ſtill find them in the beauties of nature.

But perhaps, I objected, he is not fond of riding; or he may not be able to keep a horſe.

Let him walk then, ſaid the Dean. I ſhould recommend walking to him, as every way a preferable exerciſe. Over the horſeman he will enjoy many advantages. He is inſtantly equipped. He has only to take his hat,

hat, and ſtick, and call his dog. Beſides, he need not keep the highway, like the horſeman. He goes over the ſtile—he gets into the devious path—he wanders by the ſide of the river, or through the mead—and if theſe ſequeſtered ſcenes do not make him think, I know not what can.—Beſides, he may uſe as *much* exerciſe in half the time, which is of conſequence to a ſcholar—and I ſhould ſuppoſe as *wholeſome* exerciſe.—But above all things, I ſhould wiſh him to get a habit of thinking methodically as he walks. It will ſoon become as eaſy to think in the fields, as at his deſk: and he will enjoy at once the double advantage of ſtudy and exer-

ciſe.

ciſe. Here again, he has an advantage over the horſeman. He has his hands at liberty to manage his memorandum-book, and his black-lead pencil; which with the incumbrances of a whip, and a bridle, is more difficult. To think methodically *on horſeback* is the work rather of a ſtrong head, which can purſue an argument—digeſt it in the mind—and remember the ſeveral parts and dependences of it. *On foot*, the memorandum-book eaſes the head of all this trouble, by fixing the argument, as it proceeds. For myſelf, the exerciſe of walking with a memorandum-book in my hand, hath ever been among the firſt pleaſures

of

of my life. When I was a young man, and could go among my poor neighbours, I had three employments at the same time: visiting my parish —studying—and using exercise. I have made in these excursions many a sermon. The greatest part of this book * was first rudely composed in the fields, and when I came home, I always digested what had occurred in my walk—consulted my authorities, and wrote all fair over. And even since I grew old, when it pleases God to allow me the use of my feet, I still continue the same exercise: only instead of being able, as I was then,

to

* The *Origines Sacræ*; which the Dean had just been correcting.

to take a fatiguing excurſion, without paying much attention to roads or weather, I am obliged now to ſhorten my walk—to reſt a little, and divide it into portions—to creep along eaſy paths—in garden-walks, or under ſheltering hedges.

Much do I wiſh, ſaid I, Sir, that you could continue with more eaſe your uſeful walks, in which the world hath ſo much partaken, and will long partake.—For myſelf, I ſhall certainly endeavour to imitate an example, which I am convinced is ſo profitable. I will immediately get a memorandum-book; and hope in time to find more pleaſure in bringing

home the head of a ſermon, than I have often done in bringing home a pheaſant, or a partridge.—But ſtill, Sir, there are many pious, and good clergymen, who may be great bleſſings to their pariſhes, and yet were never able to compoſe a ſermon themſelves; and cannot perhaps, by any means, induce a habit of thinking methodically—What are they to do?

Why they muſt endeavour, ſaid the Dean, as I adviſed the horſeman in the ſame circumſtances, to find employment for their thoughts, as they are able. If they are viſiting a poor neighbour in ſickneſs, or diſtreſs,

 they

they may think what to ſay on the occaſion. The duties of his pariſh will always be a call to exerciſe, and engage a worthy clergyman to be frequently abroad, eſpecially if his pariſh be extenſive.—He may alſo take a book, and read at intervals, which will always furniſh employment for his thoughts.—I have heard Sir Roger ſpeak of the mode of exerciſe uſed by his late friend Dr. Bret. He would generally, during two hours every day, ſally out into the fields, with his ſpud in his hand; and cut up all the weeds he could meet with. A field of thiſtles was to him a ſporting country: and he uſed to ſay, good man! when he

was inclined to boaſt a little of his benevolent exerciſe, that he believed, he did not ſave his pariſhioners leſs than a dozen pounds every year in weeding.—But if walking, after all, except when ſome end, or pariſh-duty is in view, cannot be made pleaſant to a clergyman, let him ſeek other exerciſe. Does he love a garden? There cannot be a more clerical amuſement, than the cultivation of it. The flower-garden—the fruit-garden—or the kitchen-garden may all afford him great amuſement, and are perfectly conſiſtent with his character. I ſhould think it no diſcredit to a clergyman to have his vines, and his fruit-

trees

trees better trained by his own hands, than thoſe of any profeſſed gardener in the country: and even his peaſe, and beans, and cabbages, to be in a more flouriſhing condition — the great philoſopher Deſcartes, I have heard, was one of the greateſt floriſts of his time. He aſſorted the ſtars in the morning, and his flowers in the afternoon.——But if the clergyman wiſh for ſtill ſtronger exerciſe, than the nicer parts of gardening afford, let him roll his walks, or dig his ground *uſque ad ſudorem*. This will be of great uſe to him; for beſides the advantage of it, it will enable him to take as much exerciſe in a couple of hours, as will ſerve him for the

day.—It is a wiſe proviſion in the ſtatutes of ſome monaſtic houſes, to oblige their members to employ themſelves in manual labour during ſo many hours in the four-and-twenty. Nothing can contribute more to give them ſpirits, and rid them of the ſpleen. I have heard, that the founder of the famous convent of La Trappe, in preſcribing this kind of diſcipline, uſed to ſay, that as labour was originally laid on man, as a puniſhment for ſin, we may be aſſured, it is one of the beſt means of keeping him out of it.

I admire his wiſdom, ſaid I, in making the rules of his convent an antidote

antidote to the natural indolence of a cloiſter. And I think our church, in giving the clergyman a glebe, hath had ſomething of this kind in its eye. I ſuppoſe you have no objection to his making the culture of it his amuſement?

None, replied the Dean, if the ſelling of his corn, and hay, do not lead him to bargain among low people at markets. I have no objection to *any* innocent rural employment. For myſelf, when I lived in the country, I had great pleaſure in all theſe things. I uſed often to ſee my horſes, and cows foddered; would viſit them in their paſtures, and fed my poultry myſelf.

myſelf. But there are few circumſtances, in which I ſhould adviſe a clergyman to gather his own tithes. It is an odious buſineſs.

I aſked the Dean, if he had any objection to *botany*, as an inducement to draw us abroad?

Not the leaſt, ſaid he, if it *be* an inducement—to me it would be none: though it is certainly very innocent; and, if I ſhould judge from the numbers who ſtudy it, very intereſting alſo. To examine the beauty and conſtruction of plants—their infinite variety—and their ſeveral uſes, I can eaſily conceive, might

furniſh

furniſh much rational amuſement. But merely to give them hard names, when they already have eaſy ones; and to *claſs them botanically*, which is in fact to claſs them ſo, that nobody, but a botaniſt can find them out, appears to me ſomething like writing an Engliſh grammar in Hebrew. You explain a thing by making it unintelligible.—I muſt ſpeak however with caution on a ſubject, of which I know ſo little*.

I then aſked the Dean, what he thought

* This cenſure of botany ſeems to reſpect Mr. Ray, who was contemporary with Dr. Stillingfleet, and the only botaniſt of note, I believe, at that time.

thought of bowls, tennis, and cricket, as clerical amuſements?

With regard to bowls, ſaid he, I am a party concerned, and therefore improperly called upon either as an advocate, or an evidence. I always liked a game at bowls, and thought it good exerciſe in a ſummer-evening. It is juſt exerciſe enough to give the body a gentle breathing, without being too violent. With regard to tennis, and cricket, I muſt be ſilent for another reaſon. I know nothing of either of them. To none of theſe exerciſes however I have any objection, if the party, which joins you in.

in them, be well choſen. It is this, which makes them innocent, or ſeducing *.

I think, ſaid I, Sir, we have now exhauſted all ſuch amuſements, as go under the name of *exerciſe*; and I cannot but acknowledge, you have been more liberal on this ſubject, than I expected. If you will be as indulgent to us in our *domeſtic amuſements*, we ſhall have no reaſon to complain. What gratification, Sir, on this

* The Dean did not perhaps know, that there are few tennis-courts, which are not places of public reſort. Every amuſement, ſo circumſtanced, he would certainly have interdicted.

this head, are you diſpoſed to allow us?

All that is neceſſary, replied the Dean. For my own part, I know not what mental amuſement men of ſcience and information want, after a ſtudious day, except that of converſing with each other. Nothing gives the mind a more pleaſing relaxation. You need not talk much yourſelf, if you are indiſpoſed; and liſtening to good ſenſe, is no fatigue.—Nor does any thing excite genius ſo much, as this colliſion among learned men. We are equally pleaſed with feeling our own ſentiments corrected, (as it is done in a manner by ourſelves) and

with correcting the ſentiments of others. Theſe meetings among learned men, may be called the *Fair of learning*. They purchaſe commodities of each other. One man exchanges his wit for another's knowledge; and each probably gains what he wants, at the expence of ſomething in which he abounds.—From this kind of communication too we get a variety of hints, which we may afterwards turn to uſe; and that without the fatigue of thinking; as other people think for us. I knew an ingenious man, who read little himſelf, but kept much good company; and had the art of picking up, and turning to account, every thing he heard.

By expanding theſe hints, and throwing beautiful lights, and images upon them, with the help of a good imagination, he would write a ſermon, or an eſſay, which might be called entirely his own; though his friends, who lived much in the ſame company with him, could now and then diſcover the clue of his leading ideas.—I ſhould not however adviſe any young man to ſeek his knowledge in this vague way. It is a hundred to one, he is not qualified for it. Beſides, it is an indolent way, when you reſt ſolely upon it. In your books you will always meet with inſtruction.

If the pleaſure, ſaid I, Sir, ariſing from the company of learned men could be enjoyed in its full purity, it would indeed be a relaxation beyond all others. Where tempers are well harmonized, I can conceive nothing more delightful. But as in chemical mixtures one ſingle heterogeneous ingredient often puts the whole maſs into a ferment; ſo in theſe learned ſocieties, one man, who talks inceſſantly, or diſputes eagerly, deſtroys all the pleaſure of the meeting; and makes us think our time might have been employed more happily on our own ſolitary meditations. For myſelf, indeed I have ſeldom mixed freely with any one ſet of people, among whom

whom ſome or other has not been of this troubleſome deſcription. At college I remember ſeveral ſuch intruders on the ſocial pleaſures of an evening.

It is very true, anſwered the Dean, noiſy talking, and eager diſputing, are two great evils in converſation; and are often found, more or leſs, in the meetings even of learned and ingenious men. And it is a miſerable thing, when a man's ſelf is the only perſon pleaſed with hearing his own converſation. Nay, I will go farther, and allow that this is not the only evil which infeſts theſe ſocieties. There are other things which

often

often render them disagreeable. A friend of mine told me lately, that in a capital town in England he was a member of a very reputable society, consisting of several men of taste and science. He was delighted with their conversation, and thought his time very profitably spent. He soon, however, found, that one or two of the members of this society had a deistical turn. This might have been endured, if they would have kept their sentiments to themselves, and discussed only points of literature. But they were forward, on all occasions, to move questions on religious subjects; and would discuss them with very offensive licence. My friend

therefore ſeeing no remedy, left his company, and conſorted no more with a ſociety, where he could not receive pleaſure without a great mixture of pain. And indeed I muſt allow with you, there are ſo many things, which make theſe general meetings of literati diſagreeable, that I know not whether, as far as mere relaxation is concerned, one has not a better chance for it in the mixed company of well-bred people of both ſexes. I ſhould at leaſt wiſh for no more than three or four, in a ſociety of ſelect friends, to make it agreeable.

But, ſaid I, Sir, there are many of

us poor curates, who have few opportunities of getting into company of any kind; who live in lonely places; and ſee few, beſides the peaſants of our own pariſhes: What reſources have you for us?

Why, in the firſt place, anſwered the Dean, the peaſants of your pariſh are, in many reſpects, the propereſt company you can keep. You will not mingle with their pleaſures and diverſions. But the good paſtor will often find leiſure to enter their houſes and cottages, and ſee and hear what they are about: and in this duty he will find his amuſement. On this head, however, I need not

inſtruct *you*.—Beſides, added he, we are rather going from the queſtion. We are not conſidering amuſement as united *with* duty; but as a relaxation *from* it.—Are you muſical? I know no amuſement ſo adapted to the clerical life as muſic. And indeed not only as an amuſement; but as a mean often, as Saul uſed it, to drive away the evil ſpirit. Sedentary men are ſubject to nervous complaints; and I have known many a man, who could, at any time, fiddle away a fit of the ſpleen.

I am myſelf, ſaid I, muſical enough, to have ſometimes felt the relief

relief you mention, though I can, on no inſtrument, charm any ears but my own.

And what other ears, replied the Dean, do you wiſh to charm? To tell you the truth, I ſhould think excellence rather a diſadvantage. I have known ſeveral clergymen, who were maſters of muſick, get into diſagreeable connections by being called on frequently to aſſiſt in concerts with people, whom it would have been more prudent to avoid.—We are willing indeed to ſuppoſe, that muſick makes a part of our heavenly enjoyments: but on earth, I am perſuaded, it is ſometimes found among

very unharmonized ſouls. It may drive away a fit of the ſpleen, or moderate ſome momentary paſſion; but I fear it has not often much effect in meliorating the heart by ſubduing inordinate affections.—If, therefore, continued the Dean, you can fiddle ſo as to amuſe yourſelf, I ſhould deſire no more.

I hope then, ſaid I, Sir, my acquirements in this art will not diſpleaſe you; for they are very far from the point of excellence.—But I am chiefly ſolicitous to have your opinion on a ſtill more favourite amuſement, which is *drawing*. It has

has given agreeable employment to many a ſolitary hour in my life, and I ſhould be ſorry to be debarred the exerciſe of it.

I have no intention, ſaid the Dean, to debar you from it. But I muſt give you one piece of advice. As you are fond both of muſick and drawing, I ſhould not wiſh you to practiſe both. One of theſe *domeſtic amuſements*, I ſhould think, might find ſufficient employment for your leiſure.—This piece of advice is from myſelf. But I am not unqualified to give you other inſtruction. I have no knowledge of the art myſelf, but I remember hearing an ex-

cellent judge give inſtruction to a young man, who had a profeſſion, as you have, and wiſhed to follow drawing only as an amuſement. In the firſt place, I remember, he adviſed his young friend againſt colouring, which all dabblers are fond of. To underſtand the harmony of colours, he ſaid, required great experience; and without it, colouring was daubing. He adviſed him alſo, I recollect, againſt attempting hiſtory, or portrait, or animal life, or any other branch, in which *accurate delineation* was required. Landſcape he recommended as the eaſieſt, and moſt pleaſing branch, which might have the farther advantage of decoying him into the foreſt,

foreſt, or the field, to examine, or copy nature.

I gave the Dean my beſt thanks for his advice. Of the utility of that part, which came from himſelf, I was already convinced by experience: and had determined to drop one of my amuſements, as I found I could not, without too great an expence of time, follow both. With regard to the other part of his advice, I lamented, that it had never been given me before. I owned I was a dabbler, and had daubed over many a ſheet of paper. But if I continue, ſaid I, to practiſe drawing, I ſhall entirely lay aſide my colours; and practiſe

tiſe my art, ſuch as it is, in a way, that may give me more ſatisfaction: though perhaps, Sir, I ſhall pleaſe you better, by not aiming at any excellence at all.

If you allude, replied the Dean, to what I ſaid about muſick, you miſtake my meaning. My great objection to your obtaining excellence in muſick, is, leſt it ſhould miſlead you into improper company. Its ſiſter art is of a more ſolitary nature, and is not liable to that inconvenience. Except for this reaſon, and the fear of too much expence of time, I have no objection to your obtaining excellence in either art.—But

though

though you ſhould not be able to pleaſe yourſelf with your own proficiency in drawing; yet, if you have a taſte for the art, you may be greatly amuſed with the works of others. A clergyman near me, who is now dead, had a ſmall collection of prints and drawings; and when he was fatigued with ſtudy (as he was a very ſtudious man) could, at any time, amuſe himſelf with a few of his prints.

But all this, ſaid I, Sir, requires taſte; and if a clergyman have no taſte for theſe amuſements, I hope you have no objection to indulge him in ſome amuſement, which does not require it—in a game at cheſs, for

inſtance, with a neighbouring vicar; or at back-gammon with the ſquire?

In my opinion, ſaid the Dean, cheſs is ſo far from being a relaxation, as all amuſements ſhould be, that if you are fairly matched, it is a ſevere ſtudy. It is a game, in which a great variety of different movements create double the variety of different circumſtances; on each of which circumſtances, ſo numerous a train of conſequences again depend, that to provide for all the contingences that ariſe from your own moves, and may ariſe from the probable moves of your antagoniſt, requires a mind intenſely occupied in

the

the purſuit before it, and vacant from every other. In ſhort, a ſkill in this game, like mathematical knowledge, may be continually advancing to perfection. When I was Fellow of St. John's, I played much at cheſs; and being fond of it, I attained, as I thought, ſome degree of excellence; till at length, from beating all the young men at Cambridge who played with me, I began to think myſelf the beſt cheſs-player in England. It happened, on a viſit to a friend in London, that an old German officer made one of the party. After dinner we went to different amuſements, and it was propoſed, that he and I ſhould play a game at cheſs, as we

were

were both known to be chefs-players. I modeſtly threw my glove; but my heart beat with a full aſſurance of triumph. I ſoon, however, perceived, that my antagoniſt opened his game in a manner, to which I had not been accuſtomed. This rouſed all my attention. But while I was defending myſelf in one quarter (for I quickly found I had to act only on the defenſive) I received a ſevere blow on another. And while I was endeavouring to recover my diſordered affairs, the enemy broke in upon me, and ſhamefully defeated me, without giving me an opportunity of diſplaying one inſtance of my proweſs. I was convinced, however, that all this miſchief

chief had befallen me from too great confidence, and an incautious manner of opening my game. I begged another trial: but it ended in the ſame diſgrace. My antagoniſt, by this time, was fully apprized what a hero he had to deal with; and exulting in his ſucceſs, deſired me to fix upon any chamber on the board I pleaſed, and uſe all my ſtrength merely to defend that ſingle poſt: he engaged to attack no other. But in ſpite of all my endeavours, he gave me check-mate upon that very ſpot. Nay, he did it repeatedly; for my ſhame was now turned into admiration. I ſat down therefore contented; and endeavoured to conſole myſelf

ſelf by forming the diſgrace I had ſuffered into a leſſon againſt preſumption.

I cannot, in return, ſaid I, Sir, tell you a ſtory of my proweſs at cheſs; but, if you will give me leave, I will tell you one of my perſeverance. I played a game with a gentleman at my own lodgings, and was victorious. You have taken me, ſaid he, rather inopportunely to-day; but if you will be vacant on Thurſday, I ſhall be this way, and will demand ſatisfaction. Accordingly on Thurſday he came about eleven o'clock; and by the time we had played three games, two of which I had won, his horſes

horſes came to the door. I cannot leave the matter thus, ſaid he; if you can ſet any little matter before me, we will go on. Two games more were played, when in the midſt of the third, a bit of roaſted mutton appeared; and by the time it was cold, I had defeated him again. I was now four or five games before him. Our intercourſe therefore with the mutton was ſhort; and we went to work again. I was ſtill victorious, when the horſes returned at ſix. This is provoking, ſaid he, I cannot leave the matter thus. Can I have a bed at the inn? His orders to his ſervant now were, not to bring the horſes till they were ſent for.

This was a melancholy note to me, fatigued, as I was already, beyond meaſure. However, as I was under ſome obligations to the gentleman, and in my own lodgings, I had no choice. The night ended late, and the morning began early. Breakfaſt came — the barber came — dinner came — all was negligently treated, except the main point. I ſighed inwardly, and hoped this viſitation would now ſoon have an end. It laſted, however, all that day; and I was ſtill two games before my antagoniſt; though I had played as careleſsly as I could, without diſcovering my indifference. As the evening drew on, and I expected every moment

ment to hear a meſſage ſent for the horſes, I was ſhocked with his telling me we could not part on theſe unequal terms. As the next day was Saturday, and he muſt of neceſſity, he ſaid, then finiſh, he would try his fortune once more. So we continued nailed to our board, till a late hour on Friday night; and began again before breakfaſt, on Saturday morning. Towards the cloſe of the day, our accounts differed in one game. But I was too complaiſant to diſpute the matter; ſo the horſes were ſent for, and I was delivered from ſuch a trial of my patience, as I never before experienced.

Scarce any miſchief happens to us, ſaid the Dean, but we have the comfort of thinking it might have been worſe: and you were happy that your friend did not come to you on Monday, inſtead of Thurſday.—As it appears, however, from *my* ſtory, how much time and pains are neceſſary to obtain excellence in this game, and from *your* ſtory, how faſcinating a game it is—it is worth while to conſider how far it may be a proper amuſement for a clergyman—and whether it really anſwers the end of an amuſement by unbending the mind. If it only ſubſtitute one ſevere ſtudy for another, it cannot certainly take the name of an amuſe-

ment.

ment *. Let every one however judge for himſelf. I found it too intereſting to be amuſing to me, and therefore in early life I left it off.—It is certainly, however, a noble game. It gives us an idea of war without its guilt. It gives us a juſt idea too of common life—of the happy effects of prudent, and cautious

ſteps

* Cowper, with his uſual deſcriptive talents, admirably portrays the ardour of a cheſs-player.

——————Who then
Would waſte attention at the chequer'd board,
His hoſt of wooden warriors to and fro
Marching, and counter-marching, with an eye
As fixed as marble, with a forehead ridg'd
And furrowed into ſtorms, and with a hand
Trembling, as if eternity were hung
In balance on his conduct of a pin?

ſteps on one hand; and of the fatal miſchief, which often attends even one falſe ſtep on the other.

I know not, ſaid I, Sir, whether ſuch games, as are made up of *ſkill*, and *chance* together, are not cloſer imitations of life. Our moſt prudent plans are often defeated by events, which do not depend on ourſelves, but ariſe from what we call *chance*: while an ill-digeſted plan ſometimes ſucceeds without any aid from our own prudence. Games, therefore, conſiſting partly of *ſkill*, and partly of *chance*, ſeem more to reſemble the courſe of events in human life, than games of *mere ſkill*, like *cheſs*.

Certainly,

Certainly, replied the Dean, ſuch games afford a juſter picture of the *circumſtances* of life: but I am ſpeaking of the *conduct* of it. Sometimes, it is true, we are ruined by unavoidable calamity; but more often by our own miſconduct: and it is this latter view of life, which cheſs ſo juſtly reſembles.

Well, ſaid I, Sir, as you repudiate cheſs from the liſt of your clerical amuſements, becauſe of its *intricacy*, I hope, you will take back-gammon into favour, becauſe of its *ſimplicity*.

Not into my favour truly, anſwered the Dean. I know too little

of it to make it a favourite. I have no objection, however, to it, but its ſtupidity. Let thoſe play at it, who like it. It ſeems to me a noiſy, rattling game, fit rather to conclude an evening after a fox-chaſe, than ſuited to the taſte of men of letters, and refinement.—But indeed I have a ſort of prejudice againſt back-gammon, as it contributed to ruin the fortunes of an excellent young man, with whom, in early life, I was intimate at college. He was related to a rich, old admiral; and was ſuppoſed to be his intended heir; which he probably might have been, had not this ſtupid game intervened. Back-gammon was the admiral's

delight.

delight. He had no reſources in himſelf. As to books, he hardly knew the top of a page from the bottom. Back-gammon was level to his genius. All his powers were centered in this game. Three, or four hours after dinner; and half that time after ſupper, he never failed to play; and all day long, if the weather did not permit him to go abroad. As the admiral was not a very pleaſing man, and beſides rather penurious in his houſe-keeping, his company was little ſought after; and it fell to the unhappy lot of my friend to be his almoſt conſtant antagoniſt. Day after day—it was weary work. I remember well his coming to me, one evening,

evening, much out of humour: "I have been playing with him, ſaid he, at this ſtupid game, from four this afternoon, till eight; and he had the conſcience, towards the cloſe of this heavy buſineſs, to look me full in the face, and cry, Couſin, you play as if you were tired."—In ſhort, my friend could not bear this miſerable treſpaſs upon his time, and began to make conditions. The admiral was not uſed to controul, took the huff, blotted him out of his will, and choſe a puppy for his heir, who was fit for nothing but to play at back-gammon.

A liberal minded man, ſaid I, Sir,

is much to be pitied, when his intereſt, and his ſentiments are thus at variance. Young as I am in life, I have ſeen ſeveral inſtances of it; but I have ſeldom known, as on this occaſion, ſentiment prevail.—Upon the whole however, Sir, I think you are too harſh in your cenſure of back-gammon. It is not ſurely a game of deep contrivance; yet I think it poſſeſſes variety enough to be amuſing even to an enlightened mind, which wiſhes, during a ſhort interval, to ſuſpend its faculties, and enjoy the refreſhment of a little privation of ſentiment. What has hurt this poor, harmleſs game, I believe, more than any thing elſe,

is,

is, its connection with thoſe wicked little cubes, called *dice*, which are employed in ſo many villainous purpoſes, that every communication with them is ſuſpected. One of our good biſhops, I have heard, is fond of a game at back-gammon, when he can get ſnug to it with his chaplain. But he ſtands much in awe of his own ſervants, leſt in paſſing to and fro, they ſhould hear their maſter rattling *dice*. So he plays always on a table, lined with green baize, and throws his dice from lined boxes*.

If

* This ſtory is told of Biſhop Gibſon of London; but as he lived after Dr. Stillingfleet's time, I ſuppoſe the ſame device has been practiſed by other biſhops.

If it had been my caſe, ſaid the Dean, I ſhould have played openly —Theſe concealments never are concealed. They only ſhew, that we have not reſolution to forbear doing, what, on ſome account, we do not think perfectly right. For myſelf, I ſee no reaſon why the biſhop may not indulge himſelf in a game at back-gammon, without ſcruple, if he like it. As for the ill-repute it lies under, on the account of its connection with *dice*, I ſee no more reaſon for it, than that knives and forks ſhould be objected to, becauſe they may become the inſtruments of gluttony. It is another connection, which occaſions the miſ-

chief.

chief. If theſe *little wicked cubes*, as you call them, were not connected with certain little *wicked circles* called *money*, they would be perfectly harmleſs. Theſe little *circles* are, in fact, the wicked companions which debauch the *cubes*; and are indeed ſuch miſchievous companions as ſeldom fail to turn all amuſements into vice. In my Utopia therefore money ſhall in no degree be connected with amuſement. Its proper place is the market, and there only it has concern.

Gaming, ſaid I, Sir, no doubt, is a very ſtrange perverſion of amuſement: but is there any objection to a trifling

a trifling ſtake, which is never felt, whether we win or loſe, and is in fact no *object?*

What end then, ſaid the Dean, does it anſwer?

Merely, I replied, to keep the attention a little awake.

You muſt allow then, anſwered the Dean, that as far as it does keep the *attention awake*, ſo far it is an *object*. The amuſement itſelf, it ſeems, cannot keep the *attention awake*; but wants a ſtimulative, the love of money, which makes you play with that care and caution, which the

amuſement

amuſement itſelf could not do. And is this any thing elſe, my good friend (twiſt and analyſe it as you pleaſe) but the ſpirit of avarice? One man's *attention* cannot be *kept awake*, as you phraſe it, without playing for a ſhilling. Another man muſt keep his *attention awake* with a pound. A third muſt be enlivened by a ſtake of ten times as much; and ſo on, till the attention of ſome people muſt be *kept awake* by ſtaking a patrimony. You ſee then plainly, that if the ſtake be ſo trifling, as to be no *object*, it can be no *incentive*; and if it be an object, it can only be ſo, by your attachment to a ſum of money; and what will you call that

attachment,

attachment, unleſs you reſolve it, with me, into the ſpirit of avarice?

But though in theory, ſaid I, Sir, you may be able to lead it up to this ſource, it ſeems, in fact, to be ſo trifling, as not to come within any moral calculation.

I know the mathematician, replied the Dean, divides matter with ſuch nicety, as to bring it to an inviſible point. But I do not like to ſee morals ſo treated. Is the *exceſs* wrong? If it be, the *approach* cannot be right. If your mind be *at all* infected with the ſpirit of *avarice*,

and the deſire of profiting by your neighbour's loſs, it is ſo far an *approach*. There are different degrees of vice, no doubt; but we are cautioned againſt breaking one of the *leaſt commandments*, as well as the greateſt. The good Chriſtian endeavours to preſerve his mind from the ſmalleſt taint; and the Chriſtian miniſter thinks himſelf particularly bound to abſtain from every *appearance of evil*.—In fine, I will not cavil with you, whether playing for money ariſes from avarice; but certainly the *amuſement* ceaſes, when it cannot itſelf produce its end; and *what does produce the end*, becomes the leading principle. So that the point iſſues here:

here: if you chooſe ſuch feeble amuſements, as are really no amuſements, without the aid of vicious ſtimulatives—it becomes you to lay them aſide; and ſeek for ſuch amuſements, as are ſimply ſuch.

To be candid, I replied, I have nothing farther, Sir, to oppoſe. Vicious cuſtom, I fear, hath modified all our amuſements, as well as every thing elſe; and hath driven them from their natural ſimplicity; connecting things with them, that have no relation to them. I cannot but allow with you, that amuſements ſhould be ſimply ſuch; and that if they connect themſelves with money,

they ſhould aſſume another name.—I then put the Dean in mind, that he had yet furniſhed us with no *domeſtic amuſement*, that came under the name of *exerciſe*. Rainy weather, I obſerved, might continue ſo long, as to make a little motion neceſſary to a ſedentary man. Do you object to billiards?

Why no, ſaid the Dean, not much. My own method, when I could not take exerciſe abroad, was to throw two or three doors open, and walk from one chamber to another, with a book, or ſcrap of paper in my hand, as I uſed to do in the fields. But I do not preſcribe my own example to

others. As to billiards, they are ſo unhappily connected with gaming, and bad company, that I have no great reſpect for the amuſement—at leaſt as a clerical one. However, as the influence of this game, from its expenſive apparatus, cannot be ſo extended as cards, I ſhould not object to a clergyman's playing at it in a private family, and under the uſual reſtriction of playing only with good company, and for no ſtake.

I am obliged to you, ſaid I, Sir, for the liberty you have given me of indulging an amuſement, which is a favourite one with me; and in

which I am ſuppoſed to have ſome ſkill.

Nay then, replied the Dean, I know not whether I ſhall not revoke the liberty I have given you. I am not fond of a clergyman's *poſſeſſing ſkill* in any game. Skill always implies a conſumption of time; and an eagerneſs after an amuſement, which I cannot approve.

But you have now, ſaid I, Sir, given me ſo much good inſtruction, that, whatever I may have done, I hope never again either to employ my time in improving my ſkill; or to uſe my ſkill in miſpending my

time.—I then aſked the Dean, if he had ever heard of the game of ſhuttlecock? or if he would laugh at me for mentioning it to him as good *domeſtic exerciſe?*

Laugh at you! ſaid the Dean; I know no game, that I value more. It has all the characters of the amuſement, we want. It gives us good exerciſe—it makes us cheerful—and has no connection with our pockets: and if I may whiſper another truth in your ear, it does not require *much ſkill* to learn. When my legs were in better order, I have ſpent many a rainy half-hour with Sir Roger, at ſhuttlecock in his hall. The worſt

of it is, few parſonage houſes have a room large enough for it; though perhaps the tithe-barn, if it be not better employed, may furniſh one.—I could ſay more in favour of ſhuttle-cock. You may play at it alone. It is alſo an exerciſe too violent to laſt long. We need not fear, as at billiards, to miſpend a morning at it. —Laugh at you! ſo far from it, that I reſpect the man, who invented ſhuttlecock.

I aſked the Dean next, if he had any objection to ſome little handicraft buſineſs, as *domeſtic exerciſe* for a clergyman? And I particulariſed that of a carpenter, or a turner; both

which,

which, I ſaid, were very well fitted to put the blood in motion.

Aye, aye, replied the Dean, I like them both. I have known very worthy clergymen good carpenters, and turners. I knew one, who had a ſhop in his houſe, and made his own tables and chairs. They were ſubſtantial, and not ill-made; and though he did not think them neat enough for his parlour, they did very well for his chambers, and ſtudy. I knew another clergyman, added the Dean, and an exemplary man he was, who was an excellent turner. He uſed to work in box, ebony, and ivory; and made a number of little, pretty conveniences

niences both for himſelf, and his friends. In the coldeſt weather, I have heard him ſay, he could put his whole frame in a glow by working his lathe.—Did not you ſee in the prints, that Monſ. Paſcal, who died the other day, had retired, a few years ago, to the learned ſeminary of Port-Royal, where he, and other eminent men made it a rule to intermix their ſtudies with manual labour* ?

I told

* The Society of Port-Royal (ſo called from a place near Paris, where they aſſociated) conſiſted of ſome of the moſt religious men, the greateſt wits, and beſt ſcholars, that France ever produced; they lived together in a happy intercourſe, without any monaſtic rule; and under no reſtraint, but what

I told the Dean I had ſeen it; and that I rather wondered at the choice, which Paſcal had made of his own employment, which was that of making wooden ſhoes.

Aye, good man, ſaid the Dean, he made them for the poor peaſants in his neighbourhood; and I ſhould be glad to give more than double their value for a pair of them to keep for his ſake.

I then

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what religion, and good ſenſe preſcribed. Their chief employment was to form the minds, and ſtudies of ingenious young men; and by their works to improve their country, both in religion, and ſcience. In ſhort, they were a ſet of philoſophers directly oppoſite to thoſe, from whom the French nation hath lately taken inſtruction.

I then mentioned book-binding to the Dean, as a clerical art.

Why, yes, ſaid he, I think it is: but we ſhould have introduced it earlier in our converſation, under the head of *domeſtic amuſement*; it will hardly come under that of *domeſtic exerciſe*.—Well, have you any thing more to offer? You ſee, I am diſpoſed to allow my brethren every mode of amuſement, and exerciſe, that is conſiſtent with innocence, and propriety of manners; and I hope the range which may be taken within theſe bounds, will be thought fully ſufficient. If I have omitted any thing;

thing; or if you have any thing farther to propoſe, let me know.

I recollect nothing, ſaid I, Sir, at preſent; and have only left to expreſs my grateful obligations to you for what is paſt. If any thing farther ſhould occur, I ſhall take the liberty, on ſome future occaſion, to propoſe it. In the mean time, I am perfectly ſatisfied myſelf with the indulgence you have given me; and ſhould think any of my brethren unreaſonable, who ſhould deſire more.

END OF THE DIALOGUES.

THIS is the ſubſtance of what paſſed between the Dean of Paul's, and me, on the ſubject of clerical amuſements. *As our converſation laſted three evenings, I had the more leiſure to commit it to writing. The force of many of the Dean's expreſſions, I fear, is injured in an account, which depended ſo much on memory: but I dare take upon me to ſay, the ſentiments are invariably his.*

As this converſation gave a new turn to all my own amuſements, it enabled me alſo to be of ſome ſervice in giving occaſional advice to ſeveral of my younger brethren: and if my executors ſhould find theſe papers, and think them worth communicating to the public, I ſhould hope

hope they might be of uſe alſo to others. Such clergymen, indeed, as have formed ſettled habits, eſpecially of card-playing, will not eaſily, I fear, give them up; but will probably defend them againſt the good Dean's arguments, as they are able. But among the young conſcientious clergy, I hope, there may be many, who may find ſomething in what hath been ſaid that deſerves their attention. To them particularly I recommend the good Dean's advice.

JOS. FRAMPTON.

THE END.